A TORY LORDLING.

BY

"BLINKHOOLIE."

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VOL. III.

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BLINKHOOLIE,

AUTHOR OF "BLAIR ATHOL," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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CHAPTER I.

"The unconquerable will,
And courage never to submit or yield."

Milton.

Arrived at his rooms that night, Henry found a letter in a handwriting he well knew. It ran thus :—

Dear Lord Henry,—The death of Stokes leaves the seat for Harrington vacant, and I hear your brother is going to support a Radical named Aspland. To what base uses do we come !

Can you not counteract this unnatural alliance, by yourself coming forward in

the Tory interest? By so doing you will advance yourself and oblige me.

Yours truly,

D.

A thrill of pride shot through Henry as he read this letter, to be followed by a feeling of deadening sorrow, for, oh how gladly would he have tackled this situation but for the accursed want of money, which now seemed to crush him and bear him down at the very outset of all that seemed hopeful.

He picked up another letter. It was one from Marks, demanding instant payment of a very large sum; another, it was his broker's account, showing another large balance due to them in respect of the Turkish Bonds; another, another—all bills; and he buried his face in his hands and sat down in mute despair.

Is it possible for man to rise against such difficulties? he wondered—and then, by magnificent chance, he recalled Disraeli's motto—*Forti nihil difficile.* Disraeli had fought against worse money difficulties than these, had contested an election at Shrewsbury with sheriff's officers waiting for him outside the hustings, had overcome obstacles and set poverty at nought—had risen by sheer worth and strength—might not another do likewise? Might not another, holding fast to the principles of Toryism, evolve success out of disaster, and triumph out of despair?

We all have our wild ambitions, in which we might be ashamed to confess our thoughts, and Henry's thoughts went back to Pitt, who lived and died in debt, yet was rich in honour and in his country's gratitude. Surely if a man has in him

but one spark of what is truly great he can be roused to fight against all troubles, to stand firm against all dangers, to be steadfast and true in spite of all temptations. There must be a touch of the inspiration from a higher power, a belief in things which we see but darkly—and then let the world attempt to overwhelm us, we will still stand—we will still illustrate, however humbly, the *virtus repulsæ nescia sordidæ.*

And Henry rose from his meditations only to fall on his knees. It is not for us here to break in on the privacy of prayer, and we pass that by.

In a few moments he had risen, gone to his writing desk, and was busily engaged with sundry letters. The first was to Mr. Disraeli, stating boldly that he would do what was suggested. The others were to sundry of the influential people of Har-

rington—old friends of his, to whom he explained his wishes and his position, and asked them if anything could be done towards assisting him with election expenses.

Not waiting to ascertain what the answers might be, he forthwith penned an address, which ran as follows :—

To the Electors of Harrington.

Gentlemen,—The lamented death of Mr. Stokes renders it once more necessary for you to elect a representative, and I understand that a Radical nominee of the Duke of Countryholm will solicit your suffrages.

It would ill become me to comment on this association of a family which I would fain believe you have always held in regard with a candidate who personifies everything that is opposed to honest English life.

I have only to say that, although a younger son, you will find in me, at any rate, a true political descendant of that family, and, while I will always, so far as possible, hold by the glorious past, which is the accumulated capital of our nation, I will as freely advance to every measure of progress which may concern the social welfare of the people.

I am prepared to support the administration of Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, more especially in respect of the Reform Bill now before Parliament, and I am strongly in favour of the Colonial Federation, until lately so ably conducted by Lord Carnarvon, believing that in this lies the future of our prosperity and continued Empire.

I will support any measure of agricultural reform, which, without shaking the security of landed property, will give to tenants

the fullest encouragement to develop the soil with the certainty that they will in any event receive full compensation for the capital and labour thus expended.

On many other subjects I will give you my opinion so soon as I can address you.

I have the honour to remain,
Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
HENRY GAINSBOROUGH.

No delay. That very night did Henry post the copy of this desperately rough address to the Harrington Conservative printer with instructions to have it "set up" at once, printed on large posters and "stuck all over the town with the least possible delay." "Now," thought he, as he dropped these letters in the post, "the die is cast; come what will, I must carry the thing through."

CHAPTER II.

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ.

Shakespeare.

CHARLES HARRISON had been up to the Castle with a message from his father to the agent, and it was late before he got away on his return journey, for he was a great favourite with all the men about the place, and most of them wanted to have some talk with him. He had even engaged in a game of odd trick with the austere butler, and won some small portion of that functionary's hard-earned wealth ; he had been given more than one glass of cheering drink, and he set forth when the

time came, eminently happy if not contented.

Not but what this was a very unusual thing for Charles; his general habit of mind was sorrowful, for his was not a nature to quickly change, if ever. He had seen Polly Stobbs pining for his brother, as he well knew; and a dreadful suspicion had crept in at last that there was only too good reason for it. If John would but marry her, Charles thought—though the bare idea was bitter anguish to him—all else would be well, but now—John had only recently come home, having grown more dissolute and revolutionary since his stay in town, and he showed not the slightest sign of interest in Polly, nor the smallest desire to help her.

And on this night in question we see Charles walking hastily, though not very steadily, home by the pathway across the

fields. There is a moon, and it is easy enough to get along—you can even see the cattle dotted throughout the big pastures, and the great far-off hills loom blackly on from behind.

There on the right is the black plantation, still bearing about it something of the horror which the evil deeds of a few years back endued it with. There it is—the tall larch-trees springing up as if eager to touch the heavens, the soft whispering of the night wind among the branches, the dark undergrowth impenetrable to the eye!

Charles pauses a moment and looks down at the scene, shuddering a little as he calls to mind the dark deed done there, when the Duke of Countryholm and Peter Stobbs were murdered. He is not by nature superstitious, but there are few people who would like to be alone at night in such a place; and as the breeze comes

soughing up a little stronger, with something like a melancholy howl, he starts with alarm and chill terror, for there on the outskirts of the wood he can see a moving form!

Softly it seems to glide into the wood and is lost to sight. Charles is no coward, but the strong drink and the remembrance of the murder combine to make him superstitious and inclined to run; soon, however, common sense gains sway, and with beating heart he walks forward to investigate, just where old Peter Stobbs and his daughter had done the same thing on that fatal night never to be forgotten.

"Some poachers, perhaps," thought Charles, and he tried to nerve himself to do his duty if he should be called on; but now he too is on the outskirts of the wood, after tramping through the wet grass and marshy ground, and there by the very way

where he had seen the figure disappear, he presses forward, not unalarmed.

There is a disturbance already among the pheasants, who are flackering off here and there, and rocketing away overhead to the quiet domicile of another cover. Forward goes Charles Harrison, until he suddenly trips over a briar, and falls flat, not hurting himself, but in the nick of time to see without being seen.

Yes, for he is within five yards of the bank of the stream, and there is a woman standing by it; her back is to him as yet, and he can only note that she has a long crook or boat-hook with her and is gazing intently on the stream.

Suddenly she turns to look round, as if hearing a sound, and the watcher from the thicket can scarcely restrain an exclamation of surprise, for it is Polly Stobbs!

Very pale is her face, and very melancholy, but with a fixed and settled purpose, and an almost cruel expression. Charles is at his wits' end to know what to do, and as he gazes opened-mouthed Polly sets to work with her crook and begins fishing about with it at the bottom of the deep hole in the stream, which is just before her.

Earnestly, almost hungrily, does she work at this, and the disappointment of apparently achieving no good result is very palpable in her face. There is some mystery which needs to be solved, but it would take a more intelligent being than Charles Harrison to solve it—he indeed is rapidly falling back on the stereotyped idea that she must be mad.

But now she is trying a little lower down in the stream, trying it would almost seem in desperation—she a weak,

delicate girl, working like grim death in the cold breath of the night.

There is a sudden exclamation, and she clutches more tightly at her crook; then after a few failures appears to get hold of something at the bottom, and brings it to the surface. Once the mysterious something falls back again and sinks, but she quickly has it again, and this time brings it right on land. As she seizes it up hastily Charles sees to his intense amazement that it is a gun, but he has small time to look at it; Polly looks hastily at the locks of the gun, utters a cry, almost of triumph, and then sets off hurriedly back with the weapon, actually walking over Charles as she goes, without seeing him. For a moment he felt inclined to follow and speak to her, and then he seemed to instinctively shrink from doing so. He rose and watched her

hastening away to the little lone cottage in the valley, and then he trudged off home, not without sundry creepy sensations.

CHAPTER III.

Imo in corde pudor, mixtoque insania luctu,
Et Furiis Agitatus amor, et conscia virtus.
Virgil.

MEANWHILE what of Henry? He had marked as one stroke of luck when he woke in the morning after making his resolve to contest the seat of Harrington, that Turkish Bonds had risen two points, and there was said to be every indication of a further rise. If this be so, thought he, I can get clear out of all my difficulties without more ado, and for the present surely Vansittart can arrange with the brokers to let me have some money without selling out the stock—anyhow let us try.

That day he spent some hours in close confabulation with Vansittart, and the good stockbrokers proved amenable to reason. They agreed to advance £1000 on account of the Turkish Bonds, and Henry gave them further security by depositing with them a transfer of his shares in the great Jumbo Mining Company, Limited—£2000 in all.

"By what time do you want this money, my lord?" asked the senior partner. "Oh, as soon as I can get it; how soon can you let me have it?" "Will Saturday do?" "Yes, that'll do if you can't manage it earlier." "Very well, my lord, you can go away and commence your canvass in perfect confidence that the money will be with you by Saturday."

The transaction was completed by Henry and Vansittart signing a promissory note for £1000, payable on demand, to be

handed by the latter to the brokers when the money was sent to Henry.

Thus it happened that Henry, collecting what ready money he could, took train and went that afternoon to Harrington, sending a telegram on to Mr Trueman, landlord of the Conservative Hotel, to herald his advance—a thing which it did so effectually that a large crowd was waiting outside the station when he arrived, and an old rattletrap conveyance, with four horses and post boys, stood ready to carry him in triumph to his headquarters.

Triumph it was indeed if one might judge from appearances. It was market day, and therefore there were plenty of people about. The cheering was immense, and in one part of the market place it was almost impossible to make any progress at all, so great was the throng of excited supporters. Henry's spirit began to rise

very high with all this, and he bowed, shook hands with people, and did everything proper under the circumstances. Some, of course, there were who disapproved, and emitted groans or other evil noises, but they were in an absurd minority, and their voices were lost altogether as Henry met his old uncle D'Aguilar at the entrance to the Bull Hotel, shook him warmly by the hand, and together the two passed inside, where were many others of the best people of the county, who pretended to be very pleased, albeit not altogether satisfied that Henry should have thus forced himself upon them, to the exclusion of what many thought their own superior pretensions.

But there is not much time for thinking about this; the people outside are clamouring for a speech, and without more ado Henry appears at one of the windows

and plunges into his first effort of the sort.

Nervous enough at first, and unable to collect his ideas, he bungles along for a short while amid cries of "speak up" and such like encouragements; gradually he begins to settle down, and in good round phrase denounces the coalition of his brother with Aspland—"a union, so ill-assorted as to be necessarily unfortunate, so unnatural as to be condemned without words from me, so base as to ensure the enlistment of every honest vote against it. I have been told that the dissenters of this place intend to support the candidature of Mr. Aspland, an avowed atheist; but I will not believe it till it is done. There may be strife, envy, and heart-burnings among very many sects of Christians, but if a man's Christianity be not a mere mockery he will unite with any and all

sects, established or otherwise, against the common enemy, the atheist."

Thus he went on, touching on the Fenian trouble but very slightly, for it did not affect the men of Harrington, and taking care to explain what a great thing Mr. Disraeli was going to do for the working-classes with his reform bill now before Parliament—a measure not achieved by the tearing up of park railings, but by the energy, the heart, and the sympathy with the masses which Mr Disraeli has always felt. "Why, gentlemen, I have heard it said that some of our fellow-townsmen, by breaking a few bits of rusty iron in London last year, are responsible for the enfranchisement of the householders, which will presently come. I cannot think that this is so; I was myself present on that occasion, and I observed that Mr. Aspland's conduct was such as to procure

him rough treatment at the hands of his followers: while the only other notable case from here was that of a member of a respected family who was tried before the police magistrate for throwing a stone at an old gentleman of seventy.

"It is not by acts like this that freedom is obtained; freedom in England was never in danger, for as surely as we live the franchise—if that be freedom—will be extended by an almost natural process as fast as ever the people are fit by reason of education to exercise it; and it behoves you by returning me to give this encouragement to Mr. Disraeli—that the people of England know and appreciate what he is doing in their cause. The cause of the nation, the cause of the empire, is no light one for a statesman to handle. Every element of strength that it gains from the traditions of a glorious past

should be retained, but every necessity of progress should be welcomed and followed up. The day is passed when vested interests could hang like a clog on the feet of national advancement; the day is passed when men could have power without merit and rights without obligations; a plague on your mutton-headed Conservative whose policy is that of the barnacle, and whose sole idea of statesmanship is that he and his should be secure and unmolested! To him and such as him I have no word of welcome here! I stand before you as a candidate to represent each and every one of you in the interests of the whole nation; in the interests of home trade against foreign and of our old constitution; and if you want a cry, what say you to 'Work for the workers and wages for the million!'"

A little rambling and inconsequent was this method of speaking, but it took

admirably with the people. Inside the building, however, there was far less satisfaction. A murmur of discontent at first swelled to a babel of voices—"Why, he's a Radical!—did ever you hear such nonsense?—I shan't be on the committee—nor I, nor I, nor I." Before Henry knew where he was he was having a very warm time of it among them, and his uncle, D'Aguilar, being privileged to speak his mind, addressed him in no measured terms.

"Look here, Henry, I came here to-day with several friends, prepared to guarantee all your expenses, and stand by you through thick and thin; but now I've heard what your d—d opinions are, I tell you you may go to the d—l—faster, if possible, than by all accounts you are going already."

"I regret deeply, my lord," said Canon

Jones, the Harrington clergyman, "that I cannot now support you, your views are more alarming than those of Mr. Aspland."

"More alarming to you, perhaps," said Henry, "or rather say that independence is more distasteful to you than Atheism; however, as I see you are all against me, there is no course open for me but to—"

"Retire, of course; that's the only sensible thing you've said," growled his uncle.

"By no means; I was about to say there is no course open for me but to depend on my own resources; and to commence with I will tell the people what has happened."

The whilom committee made a desperate endeavour to stop Henry, but he was at the window in a moment, and this time speaking with no uncertain voice:—

"Electors of Harrington,—The gentlemen who proposed to themselves to act on my committee are dissatisfied with the liberality of my views on questions touching the people; they are pleased to rank themselves among the mutton-heads I told you of; they cry aloud against me with the voice of the barnacle; they will not have me go for the people. But I *will* go for the people: I throw myself on your support, and I repudiate my friends within. Gentlemen, will you form a committee from among yourselves, and if you will stand by me, we will carry this election yet?" (Immense cheering.)

Nor was there much delay. A fresh committee was speedily formed, of whom old John Harrison was one; the old stagers retired in high dudgeon, amid the hooting of the populace, and Henry was fairly in for the contest now. He sat quiet and

thoughtful for awhile, for at one of the windows in the same hotel, listening to what he said, he had caught a glimpse of a well-remembered face—it was Dorothy.

Yes, no doubt of it; there she was, driving off now with old D'Aguilar. What would she think of all this? And, oh! if he could but be friends with her again!

What an exciting period it was—the canvass for that election, and how well Henry got on; for they all liked him, and there was something about his denunciation of the big people which won him sympathy. Day after day showed his prospects better and better; he could speak now with infinitely greater ease, and the general opinion was beginning to prevail that Aspland wasn't in it.

One thing alone troubled him—that was the money. It had not arrived, and

what could he do without it? Nomination day was fixed for Tuesday, and Monday night came yet still no remittance. He had written two or three times, and now he telegraphed to the brokers and Vansittart. The answer came from both, "All right; cheque posted to-day." What a relief!

No sleep that night, though; for the coming business of the hustings was far too exciting, so he simply tossed restlessly about and thought of the morrow. The post came, and sure enough a cheque, but what a cheque! £1000. It was actually an old one of Vansittart's which the brokers had in their possession, and which they felt justified in sending to Henry as their transactions on the Turkish Bond account were in the joint names of himself and Vansittart.

A great horror fell on him, for he was

certain Vansittart was not good for the money. He had no credit himself with the Harrington Bank, but he tried his best there. The wise manager would not touch the cheque; and now the time was come, and he, without the wherewithal to pay for his nomination. Perhaps he should have appealed to his humble supporters, but the British public are not very loyal to a man if he wants their money. Anyhow, after trying every expedient he could think of to raise the wind, he was obliged to give in. You *cannot* make bricks without straw; you *cannot* obtain a seat in Parliament without money.

In a few heart-broken words he told the people what had happened, and a chilly silence not unmixed with laughter which followed, went bitterly home to him.

How he got back to the hotel he never

knew, but back he did get, with a vision of Aspland triumphant before him, and the sneers and gibes of the greater men whom he had offended, floating around his own devoted head. Arrived at his own room, he sank on the sofa and burst into tears. How long he remained there he had no idea, but it was evening when he lifted his head and looked up.

His eye fell on a letter which was lying on the table—it was a registered one—and wearily he picked it up, and opened it, more by instinct than design. What is this?—Good God!

There, from out that envelope, he pulls a packet of Bank of England notes—ten of them, £100 each,—a sheet of writing paper encloses them with the simple words —"From a friend."

Terribly agitated, Henry rings the bell —"When did this letter come?"

"By the second post, my lord, just after you went out."

"Oh, heaven! It was in time, it was in time—if I had only known!"

It was true enough, this money had come in ample time to pay for the nomination, but the letter had been lying idle there all day.

CHAPTER IV.

Thou canst not say I did it!—*Shakespeare.*

YOUNG John Harrison had returned to Harrington to assist at the election of Aspland, and very jubilantly did he go homeward when the disgraceful act had been accomplished. To do the electors justice, however, they only took Aspland for lack of any one else. Despite all his assiduous teaching and lecturing, he had not yet really prevailed over the old fashions and honest traditions of the place. But he was elected, for all that, and John Harrison went to his father's house—the first time for many months—loud in his exultation over the victory of

what he was pleased to style "the rights of man."

Old John was now spending his last six months on his well-loved farm, and was in no mood to hear this sort of thing.

"Rights of man!" retorted he; "rights of fiddlestick! See what your rights of man have done for me on this farm! Tell you, John, you look after the rights of women, it'll better become you."

"Ha, ha!" laughed John, affecting a man-about-town air; "I can do that too, governor."

"Don't laugh, lad, if you don't want to seem more graceless than you are. You know very well what I mean, and all I've got to say is, if you don't marry poor Polly Stobbs, you needn't think to darken my doors again; and as I live, here she is with her mother, come to see us. Now, John, remember."

It was a curious coincidence that Polly and her mother should have arrived just then, especially as they had kept away for months; but another instant showed that Charles was with them, and it was on his information of John's arrival that they had come.

The meeting was an embarrassing one, for Polly could not say a word—only looked timidly at John, blushed scarlet, made half a step towards him, and, as if feeling his want of sympathy, burst into tears.

Goodness knows what it was in her heart to do. Love is strong, and with her the claim was doubly strong; and had he but given her a chance, she might have kept for ever the dark secret of his past, which she had discovered, even though it had involved the murder of her own father.

But John was hard and cold, schooled well by Aspland to sink everything in self, and view all old-world sentiments of morality, tenderness, pity, or love, except in its most brutal sense, as mere shadows of nothing; he stood there unabashed, and presently spoke.

"Good evening, Polly! Good evening, Mrs. Stobbs! Father here seems to have got into his head that there is to be matrimony between Polly and me. He was just talking of it now, which makes me mention it. I'm sure I don't know whether you'd have me." John paused here, and noted the wistful look of the poor girl. "But, anyhow, it's best to be plain-spoken. I am wedded to the cause of the people, and that's enough for me; so you see, father, what you wish can't be done."

"Out you go, then!" roared his father.

"Certainly, with pleasure; you have relieved me thus of the unpleasant burden of supporting your old age."

With a sneer on his face, John nodded jauntily to his father, winked at Charles, and was about to leave the room, when Polly, whom, somehow, no one had been noticing during the last minute, suddenly startled them all by springing to the door, and crying out resolutely,—

"Not yet."

"Come, Polly," said John, "you don't want to marry me by force, do you?"

"Marry you! I'd sooner die a thousand times than marry you!"

This was said with such force that every one started with amazement. There was no question that the girl meant now, at any rate, what she said; her eyes flashed fire, and she stood up before John a picture of anger and hate—say rather revenge.

He became a little unnerved for all his assumed nonchalance, and made as if he would pass by her, but she fairly shrieked out now,—

"Not another step! You shall hear—they shall all hear that I know you to be a murderer!"

The first feeling of all but John was that Polly was raving, and they would have sought at once to terminate so painful a scene, had not a glance at John convinced them that there was some strange mystery here. He was very pale and confused—utterly unable for a little to regain his voice. At last he said,—

"Come, Polly, you are talking nonsense—let me pass, there's a good girl."

"Let you pass? Not till I have shown that it is not nonsense. Do you know where a gun lies in the deep water in the Black Plantation? do you know that one

of its locks is missing? Ha, ha! you see I'm not talking nonsense! Look at him, every one, and hear me say that as I have a soul to be saved, it was he that shot the Duke of Countryholm and father."

The scene was now a very terrible one, for not one of the audience had dreamed of hearing any such accusation, and the demeanour of John Harrison was such as to arouse the worst suspicions.

He gulped and gasped—then stepped up to Polly—took her by the hand, and in a low voice said,—

"For the love of God, Polly, don't say these things about me; I may be a bad lot, but—but I have been happy with you, and it sounds hard to hear such words from your lips." His voice trembled, and there were tears in his eyes—for he was an arrant cur at heart—but Polly mistook this for nobler emotion, and weak and ill

as she was, experienced a quick revulsion of feeling.

"Oh, yes, yes; what have I been saying? It's all madness—I'm so ill; and I didn't mean it—forgive me, John, forgive me!" She sank sobbing upon the sofa.

John was proceeding to quietly depart, when his brother Charles suddenly spoke,—

"There is something more in this, John. I happened to see Polly hook an old gun out of that deep pool she speaks of—she didn't see me—'twas a gun with a lock off; and now I remember a lock was broken off the gun that did that murder."

"Ay, that was so!" gasped the old man.

"Curse you!" shouted John, "what has it to do with you?"

"This much, that you shan't leave here till this has been inquired into."

And Charles walked quietly up to prevent his brother's escape.

"Oh, very well, you would dare to stop me, would you? Take that, you fool!" and before any one dreamed of such a thing, John had slipped from up his sleeve a bludgeon, bound round the end with lead —an electioneering weapon—and dealt Charles a sounding crack on the head with it, which dropped him instantly—then, dashing open the door, he rushed from the house and was out of sight before those within could realize what had happened.

Attention was first bestowed on Charles, who was really not much the worse, though stunned for a moment or two; and then it was discovered that Polly had fainted. "Perhaps it is as well so," muttered old John. "She might have said more, if she'd seen him go like that."

A great sorrow seemed to have fallen on the house, though no one liked to speak of it. Charles, on recovering his senses, had

talked of going for the police, but a look at his father drove the idea away; let the dark past unravel itself as it might, he would not follow this clue further; and he whispered to Polly as they parted, "Polly, lass; what's least said is soonest mended; for the old folks' sake let's forget this, whatever it is."

"Not forget, not forgive, John, but for their sakes and for another's the secret shall lie buried."

Simple-minded Charles wondered what she meant by "another's;" but he remembered later when a young life that knew not shame or sorrow came to brighten Polly's dreary lot, dreaming not of the bitter burden of infamy it brought into the world.

Be happy, little one, and may some kind fate drop a tear on the past for thee, blotting out the record which was not thine!

Live, and be merry, till the poor mother sees in thee almost an atonement for her error, and in the contemplation of thy bright beauty finds the dark clouds melt and at last vanish right away!

CHAPTER V.

"Gold is so ductile, learned chemists say,
That half an ounce will stretch a wondrous way;
The metal's base, or else the chemists err,
For nowadays our sovereigns won't go far."

Anon.

It can well be believed that Henry returned to town after his *fiasco* at the Harrington election with the most profound feelings of disappointment, not to say despair. The 1000*l.* received so mysteriously, and so maddeningly too late, served but to accentuate his chagrin, and more than once he was half inclined to tear up the notes, or send them to some charity; bnt he was not wholly lost to common sense, and so thought better of it. Who could

have sent the money he hadn't the remotest idea, and was so constituted that he soon gave up wondering. It occurred to him however, presently, that with the Turkish Bonds rising rapidly, as they were, and this substantial amount of cash, he should be able to circumvent Marks, and get clear of all his financial difficulties; then, perhaps, another time he might tempt fortune among the electors with a happier result.

He had explained his situation in a short manifesto to the people of Harrington, announcing his unflinching determination to contest the seat next time, and, despite the odium generally incurred by want of money, it could not be said he had done himself harm by his ill-timed effort. The blow to him was a heavy one, doubtless, but not a crusher by any means, and he would have soon stood erect once more, but there was worse to come.

Arrived at his rooms in town, he found a letter from Vansittart, expressing the greatest rage and sorrow at the brokers having planted Henry with one of his cheques instead of cash, and announcing further, as the unkindest cut of all, that the said brokers had stopped payment two or three days previously, and the Turkish Bonds had been sold out against them. "You have thus," added Vansittart, "missed all the profit you would have made by the present rise in the bonds, and you have lost the security by which the 1000*l.* advance was to be repaid. You are aware that you and I signed the promissory note for that 1000*l.*, and I fear that, although you only received my worthless cheque, that promissory note will have to be paid."

Here was a pretty state of affairs—look at it any way you will—a profit of 5000*l.*,

at the least, missed, and a debt of 1000*l.* incurred for nothing, the latter, moreover, being payable on demand. Then there was all the trouble about Marks, who seemed to have an inexhaustible capacity for increasing the amounts due to himself without disbursing any more of his own money. The situation was indeed depressing, and it was with a heavy heart that Henry sat down to try and think.

Little use in thinking; that didn't seem to clear matters up at all, and the only consolation was that the 1000*l.* he had received would come in useful somehow or other; but that was little enough under the circumstances, and the fear was that the crop of misfortunes was not yet ripe.

How unmistakable is that feeling which tells us we are in for other troubles beyond those we know of! There is a gloomy

something in the background, which presently takes shape, and is far from surprising to us, for we expect it.

Henry felt that something of the kind was coming—that his cup of bitterness was not yet full; and it was in this spirit that he went wearily to attend a board meeting of the Great Jumbo (West) Gold Mining Company (Limited). There he found the bow-legged, big-headed secretary looking very serious, and the Duke of Chester somewhat tremulous. Colonel Shine seemed very hot and excited. Mr. Vansittart was pale and careworn.

Henry inquired what was the matter, and was told that the statutory meeting was fixed for that afternoon at Cannon Street Hotel, and that much hostility to the board was threatened. Shareholders had refused to pay up their "calls," and it was not darkly hinted that the directors

would presently find themselves at the Mansion House. Meanwhile, no reassuring news had come from Queensland; on the contrary, it had been shown that the Queensland Premier did beyond question allude to them in his scathing utterances, though they had reason to believe he had done so under a misapprehension.

"Well," said Henry, "if there's anything wrong, why not return the money?"

"Ah!" said the Duke of Chester, "if we could only do that!"

"But," interposed Colonel Shine, "that is out of the question, for we have disbursed almost all of it to the vendor."

"And he?" asked Henry.

"Has left England."

Just then Mr. Kingdon came in, bearing a foreign telegram in his hand.

"There," said he, throwing it on the table, "I think that will settle them."

The directors perused it eagerly—it was from the man whom, at Mr. Kingdon's advice, they had appointed as their underground manager of the mine. It was to the following effect:—

"Shaft sunk 120 feet—have driven 150 feet to it—am on rich lode, which estimate at three oz. per ton.—Jackson."

The directors were overjoyed, and it being then close on the hour for the statutory meeting, they hastened with light hearts to the Cannon Street Hotel.

Having ensconced themselves on the other side of the table which stood at the head of the room, with a handy door into an adjoining apartment at the back of them, they watched the room fill up with some hundreds of shareholders, whose aspect was far from amiable. The place was indeed

crammed to overflowing, and when the Duke of Chester got up to address them, it was evident that a stormy meeting was imminent. He was interrupted in his first sentence. "Show me the share list," cried one sallow-faced man—"Show it me, I say." The Duke waved his hand deprecatingly. "I cannot consent to do so," said he, whereat there was a storm of hissing and hooting.

Again the Duke began; but this time some one else cried, "Read the notice of the meeting,"—and the Duke, seeing that he had in his agitation made a formal mistake, sat down while the secretary, amid cries of "Speak up! You get 400*l.* a year for doing it,"—gabbled over the notice.

Then the Duke set to work once more, and, being possessed of much quiet dignity, got through his task of explaining the position very well, though he was troubled

throughout by flouts and jeers; and fierce shouts of "return the money," &c., &c. The underground agent's telegram he kept as a *bonne bouche* to the last, and after he read it there was silence and a marked effect on the meeting. "We think it almost certain," continued the Duke, making the most of his advantage, "that the immense lode of 130 feet wide, which, as you will see from the map, tends westward from the Great Jumbo mine, has been struck by our manager; and if that be so, we shall pay a big dividend before the year is out. Mr. Kingdon, however, as an expert, will tell you all about it."

There was silence now for Mr. Kingdon, except for a dropping fire of questions from obnoxious shareholders—and that gentleman stood up very pale, and began in a low voice. Dealing with generalities and probabilities he got on well,

and showed that, as gold had been taken from shafts close to Mount Jumbo (West) on either side, the existence of gold on the property might be considered unquestionable. "The fact of the underground manager having said he 'estimated,' instead of that he 'assayed' the value of the quartz he had come on, meant that he had only had time to 'pan it up' as the saying is."

"Let Mr. Kingdon go on," roared some one, as an interruption occurred, "he is doing very well indeed."

But before Mr. Kingdon could resume, a bull-voiced shareholder called from the end of the room—"Have you ever, yourself, tested the property of the Company, sir; have you ever been on it?"

Mr. Kingdon again commenced to talk of the probability of the auriferous

deposit passing under the Company's property.

"D—n your probabilities!" cried the bull-voiced one. "I want my question answered; had you tested the value of the Company's property before you joined the Board?"

Mr. Kingdon now began to hesitate and gasp. The man who hesitates is lost; and at once the meeting rose in its wrath at him, with howls of execration.

"I *will* have my question answered," continued the bull-voice time after time; and at last Mr. Kingdon, having read what he really said in the prospectus, sat down, fairly overcome.

Then arose numerous gentlemen, raging to catch the eye of the chairman, and it was long before they would agree that one Perkins had caught it. This gentleman was, at first, suspected of being a friend

of the Board, but soon he proved terribly otherwise. He had managed to collect the most damning facts—including a full report of the Queensland Premier's statements about the property—he asserted, moreover, that the shaft alluded to by the underground manager, and the drift also, had existed before the prospectus was issued, and Mr. Kingdon would not admit having been on the property, because he would otherwise have had to admit that he knew of this shaft which had been found to contain no vestige of gold. That the property had changed hands for an old song; that he simply did not believe the telegram that had been read to the meeting—and he moved that a committee be appointed to examine into the circumstances of the Company.

The Duke of Chester, prompted by the solicitor, interposed, and said that no

business could be conducted at this—the statutory meeting; but the excitement of the shareholders was now at boiling-point, and they meant to have their way, formally or otherwise.

All this while Henry had sat, as if in a maze, gazing at the sea of angry faces in front of him, and wondering how on earth he ever came to be in such a scrape, without having had the remotest intention of doing wrong. He even sat motionless, when the Duke, the secretary, the solicitor, and the other directors, thought it prudent to retire through the door behind them, and the meeting, surging forward, lifted Perkins into the chair, and unanimously elected the committee he nominated, gave him power to spend money on lawyers, and, with groans for the directors, finally adjourned for a fortnight.

. . . . .

"And this," said Henry to himself, as he drove off westward, "is my first experience of the City. It shall certainly be the last."

CHAPTER VI.

"All thing which that schineth as the gold
Is nought gold."

Chaucer, Canterbury Tales.

A FORTNIGHT had passed away and the shareholders of the Great Jumbo (West) Gold Mining Company (Limited), had held their adjourned meeting, which, though informal, was quite sufficient to prove to the directors that it would be almost impossible to make men of their temper pay up the overdue calls. Meanwhile, sundry payments were falling due for the machinery which Mr. Kingdon had ordered, not to remember the never-ceasing instalments which had to be remitted to the vendor.

Matters grew more and more serious, and at last, when Henry happened to be rather late at one of the board meetings, a crisis arrived; the Queensland directors had repudiated the telegram of the underground manager, and resigned.

It was just as Henry entered the board-room that Colonel Shine ejaculated with extreme decision,—

"Well, if we can't get any gold from the mine, it must be a d—d swindle!"

The secretary was holding up his hands deprecatingly.

"I say it must be!" continued the excited colonel; "and I am sure my friend here, Lord Henry, will bear me out. Good God, man! we shall all be at the Mansion House before we know where we are."

"What on earth is the matter?" asked Henry.

"Matter?" rejoined Colonel Shine, "why, there's no money at the bank, nor likely to be; and there'll be a petition presented against us to-morrow. We'll be wound up, and how shall we account for having spent all the capital, and not made a penny piece?"

"Don't know, I'm sure. What do you say, Vansittart?"

"Well, Lord Henry, you see—"

"Oh, come, it's no use making excuses," interrupted the colonel. "We're in a deuce of a mess."

"But," urged Henry, "let Vansittart speak; listen to Vansittart. You were always giving me *that* advice yourself."

"D—— Vansittart!" roared Colonel Shine. "I wish none of us here had ever heard his voice!"

"Pray be calm, colonel," said Vansittart very blandly. "The position is serious,

doubtless ; but that is all the more reason why we should not quarrel among ourselves. Let us try to see some way out of it."

"That advice, at any rate, is good," said the Duke of Chester. "What do you propose ?"

"Well, your Grace, I apprehend we can get some more capital from the public if—"

"If what ?"

"If the directors, by giving their personal guarantee, will enable us to procure a loan for the temporary difficulty."

But some of the directors were old hands, and had been at that game before. A murmur of disapproval arose, and convinced Vansittart nothing could be done in that line.

Mr. Kingdon said little or nothing, but at last observed, "I feel sure the

underground manager would not deceive me—"

"There you are very likely right, sir," observed Colonel Shine significantly.

"What do you mean, Colonel?"

"Oh, nothing! I don't think *you* are likely to have been deceived, Mr. Kingdon, whatever the rest of us may have been."

Mr. Kingdon looked half-disposed to resent this ambiguous utterance, when Vansittart broke in and addressed the Duke of Chester, who sat fumbling with a pen and tearing up pieces of blotting-paper in his perplexity.

"If your Grace would see the bankers yourself, perhaps they might extend our credit?"

"And," added the secretary, "I have already prepared a scheme for reorganizing the company on a paying basis."

"You must be an alchemist, then,"

muttered Colonel Shine ; " for, it seems to me, you can't otherwise get gold out of this mine any more than you can take the breeks off a Highlander."

But meanwhile the Duke of Chester had decided to go to the bank, and Henry volunteered to accompany him. They were ushered in to where one of the partners sat writing, and the Duke presently explained with much circumlocution that they wanted an advance of 5000*l.* for six months. At first the proposal seemed to be favourably received, but presently the partner went out among the books, and returned with a by no means prepossessing countenance.

" I regret to say, your Grace, that we cannot entertain this application. The account is a very unremunerative one now, and shows no sign of vitality. I observe that it is actually overdrawn, and I must ask

you to adjust this, for meanwhile we can honour no more cheques."

Henry thereupon urged the immense wealth lying in the mine, which nothing but a little more capital was required to extract and bring home.

"I sincerely trust that may be so," said the banker; "but you must understand that our business would never permit us to advance on so speculative a security as that. I am sorry we cannot oblige you. Good day."

And so the crestfallen directors went back to their office to report their failure.

One expedient after another was suggested, but nothing availed, nothing served to avert the crisis which came on the morrow—the petition; and in due course the winding up, and the discovery

of the liquidator that owing to the non-disclosure of certain contracts the directors were personally liable for the bulk of the money which had filtered through the pockets of Vansittart and his "friends."

Henry went in despair to Marks, who made light of this new difficulty—said it would all blow over, and suggested a prompt payment of something to himself.

Henry professed his inability; and then Marks, surveying him with a curious expression, said,—

"Well, my lord, I don't like to press you; for I have a great regard for you; and my daughter Judith has too."

"Why, I have never seen her!"

"Ah! but she's seen you—trust a woman for that. Come, now, what say

you to marrying her, and I'll see to the rest?"

Henry gazed at him in amazement; then turned and went away without a word.

CHAPTER VII.

"'Forward' rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one."—*Tennyson.*

HENRY was now thoroughly down on his luck, for claims altogether beyond the possibility of his dealing with them were now enforceable against him, and it seemed practically impossible to effect any escape, for the idea of marrying Marks' daughter was, of course, too monstrous to entertain for one moment. The papers were full of comments as to the Great Jumbo Gold Mining "swindle," and there was consequently the unpleasant feeling of being mixed up with something shady, besides having incurred a desperately

heavy liability, and it was about this time that Henry received a letter from his sister Mary—one of the first she had written him for months. It ran thus—

Dearest Henry,—I expect you think very ill of me for not having written; but I have had no reason, except idleness, for not doing so; and now, when I do write, it is only to tell you of a most dreadful thing—Beau has gone off with Mrs. Lee Fenwick; her poor old husband is broken-hearted, and people all round are furious; they say it will be unsafe for him to ever show his face in Harrington again. Is it not terrible! and what *am* I to do?

I have not seen so much of Dorothy since she went to live with uncle, and it is very lonely here, but I don't like to come up to town; aunt is to be married next month, and then I shall be quite alone.

Tom came over the other day, and took me out for a ride. He says you have a good racehorse somewhere. I hope this is so ; but, oh! what is to be done about Beau ? only fancy the disgrace !

Your loving sister,

MARY.

Henry was not a bit surprised by the contents of this letter ; but it made him very gloomy all the same. "There is some curse on us, surely," thought he, "otherwise, why should we thus drag our name through the mire? What a fool Beau is ! Why couldn't he be satisfied to remain as he was ? What earthly good does he propose to himself by this elopement ?"

The same sort of question has often been asked on other occasions, and there is but one reason, which is, that women

are often much stronger-willed than men, and get their own way, even though it amounts to the man deliberately sacrificing himself. Why else should the heir of many honours ally himself, as is sometimes the case, with a woman of notorious evil life? And why should a man held in esteem by all his friends forfeit everything to play the fool?

Henry waded wearily through his pile of dunning letters and solicitors' demands.

"There must be an end to all this ere long," he muttered; but the end was, after all, not yet, and he dismissed the thought for the time and went off to Lady Montresor's reception. Mr. Montresor had just received a Baronetcy.

That lady was by no means so fulsome in her friendliness to Henry now, but the scandal concerning Beau had already gained currency, and so, for the time

being, her interest in our friend revived. Henry, however, refused to be pumped on the absorbing topic, and changed the subject to politics somewhat adroitly.

"You see, Lady Montresor, Disraeli is making headway, after all."

"After all, indeed! What shall we have after his Bill, I wonder—the Deluge?"

"Oh, no, we shall have a national government."

"Now, come, my lord," said Sir Adolphus Montresor; "veil it as you will, you can't blink the fact that this measure will make us the slaves of the people."

"You must let me write an article in your paper, and I'll readily prove that education and property will always prevail over the masses."

"Yes," continued Mr. Barrington, who

had just entered, "but when the masses are all educated—how then?"

"Let the best man win."

"Really, Lord Henry, your opinions are too shocking," said the Dowager Countess of Trevor; "I suppose you have picked them up in the City—I can't imagine where else any one of your family can have become so perverted."

"No, I think I have dug my opinions out of my heart."

"More than Disraeli can say," said Sir Adolphus, half-sneeringly.

"Ah, now there I beg your pardon; it is the fashion to call Disraeli cold and cynical, but no warmer-hearted man lives. I shall never forget passing by his house late the other night, when I saw him coming back from the House, and he went in looking as calm and emotionless as ever; but I heard next day how he had just previously

scored a splendid victory over Gladstone —you remember the amendment on the Compound householder question. He had got a majority of 310 to 289, amid such cheering as was never heard, and the whole party rushed to shake hands with him and press him to come along to supper at the Carlton. But this 'emotionless' man's first thought was of some one else, —his wife, and he hurried home forthwith to her. Don't think he wasn't elated by his triumph, for Mrs. Disraeli told me a day or two afterwards 'He ate half the raised pie and finished the bottle of champagne which I had got ready for him.' Well, I think there he showed a true heart."

"What, by eating the pie?" said Lady Trevor.

Henry was disconcerted, and those who heard the remark laughed, so he passed

along through the large and beautifully ornamented rooms.

Here and there he heard scraps of conversation referring to Beau's escapade, and he thought people in general looked a little askance at him. Colonel Shine was among those present, and Henry was soon drawn into conversation with that worthy.

"I fear," said the colonel, "things look very black for us about that company; and people seem half to imagine we have wilfully done wrong. Wish that blackguard Vansittart had been hung before I met him!"

"Well, we have no right to wish to forestall destiny; and then, you know, we ought to have looked into the thing ourselves."

"If we had done, we should have been no wiser."

"Then we had no right to be directors."

"Ah!"

"But," continued the colonel, "to change the subject—aren't you glad to see old Gladstone's played out at last—resigned the leadership?"

"I wish it may last," said Henry.

"Oh, it's sure to last—the man's done; he will trouble us no more."

"I hope you are right, but I *fear* he is only in the sulks."

So passed an hour or two of the evening in conversation of no great moment, though full of much interest at the time. There was much, very much, to rivet attention on public affairs at that period. The Fenian movement was a serious danger; the unsatisfactory state of the law as to trades unions had resulted in appalling horrors, such as those to which

the infamous Broadhead confessed, and affairs in the continent were alarmingly chaotic—in so much that Lord Stanley wrote, "I am not sanguine of averting a war," but through it all Disraeli pursued the even tenor of his way, his party now supporting him in sheer desperation, on the principle of "In for a penny in for a pound"—the way was being steadily cleared for the "leap in the dark"—even though that darkness swarmed with all the evil shapes that at present were terrifying men's minds.

Amid all the great things Lord Beaconsfield ever accomplished nothing was so great as his passing of this Bill under the circumstances which he had to deal with, and nothing but his life-long belief in the people—in the true meaning of the word—would have given him force to do it. Spite of dire forebodings he

bravely ended his speech on the third reading thus:—"For my part, I do not believe that the country is in danger. I think England is safe in the race of men who inhabit her; that she is safe in something much more precious than her accumulated capital—her accumulated experience; she is safe in her national character, in her fame, in the traditions of a thousand years, and in that glorious future which I believe awaits her."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Forti nihil difficile."—*Disraeli's Motto.*

The days passed on, and for Henry there now seemed to be a constant inflow of summonses and other obnoxious legal documents. His affairs were indeed in a desperate state, and no means of extricating himself from his difficulties appeared.

To increase his annoyance, Aspland was being rigorously excluded from Parliament, it being rightly held that an avowed atheist could not take the oath of membership. Aspland had made many abortive attempts to carry his point, but

it had ended in his being unceremoniously removed by the police, with a torn coat-tail and much loss of dignity. There began to be some talk of moving for another writ for Harrington, and Henry reflected on his own powerless condition with the bitterest chagrin.

He had now found rooms in St. James's Place beyond his means, and was constrained to secure a humble bedroom at 15*s.* a week, making shift to have his headquarters otherwise at the club.

The article he had promised to write for the *Daily Gazette* had been written and published—it had caused some attention, and been quoted by the evening papers. Thus encouraged, Henry thought he might live by the pen, at any rate, and he very soon reeled off a dozen articles on various subjects, and sent them to the principal papers and magazines, with a request for

their return if not accepted. Ten were returned.

Nothing daunted, he shuffled these ten and sent them out again to the same quarters. This time three were accepted. Five came back.

Once more he judiciously shuffled them, and after another effort or two of the same sort, actually placed the whole twelve articles successfully.

But the papers, though somewhat glamoured by his name at first, and consequently predisposed to accept what he wrote, very soon began to tire of him —his politics were so peculiar, and he hadn't the remotest inclination to write according to the instructions of an editor, so his profits quickly languished, and the question of daily maintenance assumed alarming importance. Of all weary things, the worst is to be moneyless in London,

and without knowledge where to turn to earn a penny.

That the unemployed of the working-classes suffer terribly is unquestionable, but their suffering is not so acute as that of the man who has fallen from a greater height. To have been born and bred, as Henry was—to have never consciously gone wrong—and yet to be plunged in such a sea of trouble, hunted by process servers and sheriff's officers, hard up often and often for a dinner, without any prospect of work, and things going apparently from bad to worse—it was hard luck indeed, and he often enough thought whether it was worth while to continue the struggle, whether it would not be best to lie down and die, as in sheer weariness he felt he could so easily.

Yet, struggling up still, beaten down, but not crushed, there remained the spirit

which had from the outset made him a follower of Disraeli, had enabled him to boldly defy his committee at the Harrington election, and had carried him through that bitter disappointment.

It is not that the genius of one man is so much greater than another's; it is not that pure sentiment and lofty aspirations are monopolized by a few; it is not mere talent that is the essential factor of greatness; but he in whom is indomitable courage to face the rebuffs of the world; he who possesses a belief in himself, tempered by reliance on a higher power, and in no way arrogant; he who can find virtue in defeat, and life out of what might almost seem death; sensitive as a delicate woman, yet with the pluck of a bull-dog, unswerving of purpose, and never doubting his ultimate success—this is the man who will succeed, ay, and more

than succeed; for he will write his name on the pages of history, and live for ever in the grateful memory and loving hearts of his countrymen.

Maybe some such thoughts as these did dimly course one another through Henry's brain; but he was a good deal too unstable as yet to entertain them fully. Perhaps the ordeal to which he was being subjected was doing him good, making him know himself as it were, and act, so far as possible, with a purpose. It may be doubted whether, under happier circumstances, he would have ever descended into the arena of genuine life from the benches of careless ease where he had been seated. Now his fate was come upon him, and amid all the hard struggle there was the dawning of a brighter day.

This was merely an idea—for in reality

the plague of writs and judicial persecution grew worse, while the means of maintenance grew less. Thus he passed through several dreadful months, eschewing society save for once at that splendid ball given on July 19th at the India Office, in honour of the Sultan, when amid the fairy-like scene that most mournful event occurred—the death of Madame Musurus, the wife of the Turkish Ambassador, whom we in England have so long known and appreciated.

It was an incident which created profound gloom and sorrow, and from that ball Henry went home doubly depressed, questioning almost in his mind whether the dead are not happier than the living.

What strange contrasts are brought before us in actual life!

On his table he found lying a letter from Tom Elliot, which ran thus :—

DEAR HENRY,—Good luck at last. Matt Dawson has got the two-year-old fit at last, and has tried it to be a clinker. He will have a try for the Champagne at Doncaster, and will win. Let me know where and when I can see you.

Yours ever,

TOM ELLIOT.

CHAPTER IX.

"There's something in a flying horse."
Wordsworth.

Beau and Mrs. Lee Fenwick had been scurrying from place to place in search of distraction, and now they were at Scarbro', staying at the Grand Hotel, and endeavouring to imagine that for them, as for those around them, life was a pleasant whirl, with nothing in it to regret, except moments when propriety had made it dull.

Indeed there was a novelty in the position, so far, which was attractive enough even for the lady; but she was all the while playing a deep game—having begun at the instance of Aspland with

the mere idea of winning over the young Duke for political purposes, she had been suddenly seized with the idea of marrying him.

Her husband was the only obstacle, for she had no doubt of being able to influence Beau as she wished; he had scarcely any will but hers.

At first there had been serious doubt in her mind as to whether Mr. Lee Fenwick would proceed for divorce, and thus put on record the dishonour, not only of himself, but of the Duke, whose name and family he held in such esteem; but the good man, after much reflection, concluded that it was his duty not to in any way connive at evil conduct, and so it fell that the divorce suit was instituted, and the designing woman began to see her project coming within the bounds of the possible.

What a glorious place Scarbro' is for all

who want to shake themselves a little free from the rigid world! The study of life, as you sit on the Spa, and watch the moving throng, is alone as good as the best novel ever written. There is a spice of gaiety leavening the mass which you meet with nowhere else in England, something which is outside our insular habits, and which, elsewhere, would be regarded as far from proper—yet at Scarbro' you can do a great deal without much fault being found, and you can see a great deal without being inclined to find fault. Thus, for instance, Beau openly paraded with Mrs. Lee Fenwick, and was the cynosure of many eyes, but no one seemed to take umbrage at his conduct, nor was he prevented from taking her to one or two of the hotel balls—indeed the proprietors or managers felt honoured by his presence. He corresponded occasionally with his

agent at home, spent any amount of money, and felt himself supremely happy, like the fool that he was.

And she humoured him to the top of his bent, though at times with judicious tact affecting to be angry and inclined to leave him for ever. Beau was really a child in her hands, and so far from growing tired of her he was still more desperately in love—if one may call it so. What days those were! His yacht was anchored off Scarbro', and many a jovial party had they on board; and many were the happy evenings when he sat alone with her, and talked such silly sentiment as might accord with the circumstances, while the two looked far away over the sea—bright in the moonlight.

There is small wonder that, having broken down all the foundations of faith in a higher power, they had no difficulty

in persuading themselves that their conduct was in no way wrong, and that the feeling of the world in such matters was mere superstition. "I love you," Beau would say, "and there is no religion to compare with that."

And then came the hearing of the divorce case, and a decree *nisi* was pronounced.

It was just after this momentous event that Doncaster races came, and Beau proposed, half in bravado, that they should go to the meeting. Mrs. Lee Fenwick was nothing loth; and a house having been secured, goodness knows at what expense, and the servants sent forward, the strange couple followed on the Monday, in time for the next day's racing.

Even then the town of Doncaster was very full, and the crowd of visitors kept hourly increasing. No more sporting

crowd ever assembled than at this yearly festival. You will even see clergymen who play Nap in the railway trains with any one who may be there; and there are Methodist parsons who have a "bit on" on the sly, while the men who present you with tracts, and inquire "Who will be at the races?" and answer the conundrum themselves, "The devil will be there!"—even these men have been heard to shout, in a moment of excitement, "The favourite wins! The favourite walks in! he absolutely walks in!"

Let it be remembered, to the credit of the railway companies, that they bring people to Doncaster for cheap fares instead of black-mailing them as do the southern companies under similar circumstances.

What an amount of fate is compressed

into those four days! Not only is the Leger decided, but in the sale ring an enormous number of blood stock changes hands, and the heroes of Derbys and Legers to come are often enough among the lot, like needles in a bottle of hay. Lucky are they who chance to pick them out, for it is only chance.

But Beau has no heart in sport really; he has come just because he is in the habit of coming, and, especially on this occasion, to show that he is not afraid of the world. Nay, on the opening day (Tuesday) he has the cheek—for it is nothing else—to take Mrs. Lee Fenwick on to the ladies' stand, and there remain with her as cool as a cucumber, while, amid all the rage which this proceeding causes, no one exactly summons up resolution to tackle him.

What a crowd there is! One might

almost think it the Leger day; and now there go the starters for the first race. No one cares much about them, but there are some rare good ones in the lot for all that—for instance, Fripponier, Sundeelah, Viridis, Blueskin, Xi, and Speculum. "Frip" is a strong favourite, and he gets home by a head from old Sundeelah, who is carrying the welter weight of 9 st. 11 lb.

Now comes the filly stakes, and the lovely Athena, with odds of 100 to 30 on her, wins yet another race for the Marquis of Hastings, who with her, Lady Elizabeth, and the Earl, has indeed a brilliant lot of two-year-olds this season, likely to carry all before them next year, and disperse the clouds which are gathering over their noble owner.

Alas! we little know what is in store! Few racing prospects could at that time

have been more bright—upon none has cruel destiny ever brought so sudden and miserable an end.

But now we have the time-honoured Champagne Stakes; and Beau and his companion have become quite listless in point of interest, caring really nothing about racing. They are, indeed, about to go and lunch, when Beau's eye, glancing at his card, catches sight of the name of Hero—Mr. Henry's Hero—and then he notices the pedigree.

"Why," he said, "that's a sister to my old horse, Leander! I wonder who Mr. Henry is! There she goes—a nice smart filly, too. I think I must go down and have a bit on her."

And off he goes, with just a spark of animation for the sport kindling in his heart.

Mrs. Lee Fenwick moves a little from

the place where they had been, and suddenly finds herself standing face to face with Dorothy, who is there with old Squire D'Aguilar.

"How do you do, Miss Desanges? How well you are looking!"

And Mrs. Lee Fenwick held out her hand in the coolest manner possible.

Dorothy flushed scarlet, not knowing exactly what to do; and suddenly Beau returned, who, without seeing Dorothy, exclaimed to Mrs. Lee Fenwick,—

"Do you know, I've just seen Matt Dawson, and he tells me that filly Hero belongs to—whom do you think? Oh, you'll never guess. Why, that precious brother of mine—Henry. I wish I hadn't backed her; he's such an unlucky devil!"

Then catching sight of Dorothy: "Ah, Dorothy, how are you? You don't

like me, I know; so I'll relieve you of my near presence; come, dear!"—and with Mrs. Lee Fenwick he moved off a little way.

But what did Dorothy care about this? She was thinking of nothing but the race now, and that beautiful filly, Hero. "Has Hero a chance?" she eagerly asked of the old squire.

"Not a ghost of one; Blue Gown will walk in."

This was rather a damper, yet still she hoped, and if ever wishes could command success, the beautiful brown filly who went raking away down to the post with Jem Snowden in the saddle would certainly be bound to have the best of it to-day.

But there goes the hard wiry little gentleman—Blue Gown! What a back and quarters, what perfection of symmetry!

A pity, is it not, that he has a somewhat sour-looking head. However, he doesn't go on that, so no matter. Eleven other starters are there, including the great slashing Pace, Mercury, Vale Royal, &c. —and still some horrid man in the ring is roaring out "Seven to one against Hero; Hero I want to bet against!"

But there! They are off! and Dorothy looks at the struggle with an interest which she had never dreamed of feeling in a horse race.

Yes! Hero is well up among them, and now as they round the bend into the straight, everything seems closing up. Which is in front? Oh, they are all together. Hero?—Yes, there is Hero still, next the rails, and Snowden is sitting very still.

"Oh, Mr. D'Aguilar, is 'Hero' winning?"

"Hero! Stuff and nonsense; look at Blue Gown!"

"Which, where?"

"Why, there—with the cherry and black."

Dorothy gazed at the gallant little bay who was striding along with Wells in the saddle, in a desperately easy fashion. Still, Hero was all there. "Hero will win, Mr. D'Aguilar. I don't care what you say. She *must*, she *shall*—oh!" For the situation was now too much for words; opposite the stand the two seemed locked together, a desperate race it appeared to Dorothy, but Wells in reality only flourished his whip, and landed Blue Gown as cleverly as possible by half a length; Hero, second; Bel Giorno, third.

"There you see," said the old Squire. "Didn't I tell you?"

Dorothy felt very downcast—it seemed like an evil omen for Henry, that his filly should thus suffer defeat—she could not but feel the deepest interest in him; he was, in her view, to do great things, and now here was yet another failure. "After all," she thought, "it is better he should be discouraged from going in for racing."

All the same, she was very sad at heart.

CHAPTER X.

"Fortuna, sævo læta negotio, et
Ludum insolentem ludere pertinax,
Transmutat incertos honores,
Nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna."—*Horace.*

Meanwhile Henry had utterly failed to raise money to pay expenses to go down to Doncaster. This may seem almost incredible to those who reflect on who he was, but it is a fact.

Doubtless he could have had it from some of his old friends, but he was too proud to ever ask them, and his solicitations were only to Marks, and others of that kidney. Marks had not abandoned the idea of a matrimonial alliance between his daughter and Henry—at least Mrs.

Marks, a fat and greasy Jewess, had set her mind on it; so he was not altogether repellant, but he laughed aloud when he heard that Henry wanted to go to Doncaster to see the filly which he (Marks) had foisted off on him, run for the Champagne. The Epsom trainer who had had charge of her at first had assured Marks she was valueless—"slow as a man, in fact." That was how Marks came to let Henry have her, as part of one of his advances.

"Well, well, now, my lord; the filly's a nice filly, a nice filly—shouldn't have sold her to you if she hadn't been; but dear, dear, the Champagne; and Blue Gown starting too!"—and again Marks laughed heartily.

Henry was about to blurt out that Matt Dawson thought she would win; but the experience of the world, which he was

learning by adversity, checked him, and set him thinking whether this was not a legitimate occasion for having a pull out of Marks once in a way.

"Oh," said he, "you quite mistake me if you think I am confident of winning because I let her run, and want to see the race; I have only a fancy that way, a stupid one, I dare say; indeed I should be fool enough to back the filly if any one would lay me the odds—just for luck."

"Why, I'd do that myself, my lord!"

"Ha, ha! that would be rather a good joke; it would be a good way of paying you if she won; and if she lost, I should only owe you a bit more."

"Precisely, my lord," said Marks, who, feeling certain that victory for the filly was impossible, thought he might just as well as not increase the balance due to him from Henry by means of a bet which

he regarded as good as won. "Precisely. Now what shall I lay you the odds to?—a thousand?"

"All right. What you like. Two thousand if you like; it's no use acting in a small way when one is hard up."

"Very good, my lord, put it down. I lay you the starting price odds to 2000*l.* against Hero for the Champagne. Well, to be sure; that's the easiest way of making money I know of;" and the echo of Marks' laughter still rung in Henry's ears as he went home to his lonely room. This was on the Monday.

On Tuesday, not being able to get to Doncaster, he took up his position at the club in the afternoon, to see the telegram of the result of the race as soon as it arrived.

A terribly trying thing it is to wait for a telegram under such circumstances,

when you see from the clock that the race must be over, and your fate really known. Henry was put out of his misery pretty soon, for the fatal announcement was unusually rapid :—

CHAMPAGNE STAKES.

Blue Gown . . .	1
Hero	2
Bel Giorno . . .	3

So, so; another disappointment! and he walked sadly away, scarce knowing what to do. His hopes had been raised so high over this, and the disappointment was very great.

It was late that night when he got to his room, and there was a telegram awaiting him. "The result of that cursed race, I suppose!" he muttered, as he half-reluctantly tore it open. It was from Tom Elliot, and ran thus :—

"'Hero' has won the Champagne. Blue Gown was first, but disqualified for carrying overweight. Stakes worth fifteen hundred."

Then everything seemed to grow misty, and Henry knew no more.

CHAPTER XI.

"Now, midst these wonders, were these tables spread,
Whither the wandering toilers soon were led,
And there with meat and drink, full delicate,
Were feasted."

Life and death of Jason.

HENRY was indeed bewildered by his little slice of good fortune—by no means a little one, by the way, for had it not rid him as nearly as possible of his liabilities to Marks, if the old Jew did not repudiate the bets? and did it not bring ready money in its train, which was almost more important? For a little while he felt almost like a rich man, though he had not as yet handled a penny of his winnings, nor did he know exactly when he might be able to do so.

It did not take very long to go and see

Marks, who affected great indignation at first.

"He had never been so shamefully sold in his life—robbed, in fact!"

Henry, however, soothed him somehow.

"Come, come," said he, "you haven't to hand over a farthing, you know; and as to cancelling so much of my debt—well, you can't but see that, in the first place, you were very unlikely ever to have been paid, and, in the second, the debt was a somewhat imaginary one. You aren't a bad old fellow, Marks, on the whole, and I don't mean to drop doing business with you; so suppose you give me 100*l.* until I can draw some of these winnings."

Marks grumbled and growled—talked of having his money, in spite of the bet—but then, as he had a large sporting con-

nection, he was not likely to cut his own throat in that way; and finally gave Henry 100*l.* at about 100 per cent. for one month.

Thus enriched, Henry's first idea, after the manner of Englishmen, was to give some one a dinner; should it be a gay party, with Miss L'Eclair to do the honours? No, there was some little thing in the nature of conscience which forbade this. The interposition of providence, as it were, which brought him money, deserved some worthier treatment. Should he call on his old companions, and see how they would receive him? No; not yet. There was something in such companionship not completely true.

Should he look up the cronies of Fleet Street, among whom, in writing for papers, he had found many associates; and should

he make them merry at the Cheshire Cheese, or at the Cock tavern? No, visions of red noses and sallow cheeks, whose owners were alone to blame for their poor circumstances—visions of drink taken in bravado, in frolic, in sorry jest, or in madness to supply failing brain power—all these flashed before him when he pictured Fleet Street! and he thought, No; one may have much good company thereabouts, but not really of the right sort. God help them!

And all this while he was walking along eastward, not knowing quite what to do. By chance he encountered a man who begged of him. Henry looked up, and noted a dirty but not unpleasant face, and, half by accident, asked the man if it was very difficult to find work.

"It is that, sir; or I would not be talking to you now."

A few more inquiries showed Henry that this was a genuine case of distress—a working man who had been shut out from his old trade by the success of foreign competition—a strong, decent man, dependent on charity.

"Ay, sir," said he, "but for dinners given now and again by kind friends, there's thousands of us would be under the sod now."

Dinners! The idea chimed in with what Henry had been thinking of.

"Could I give you and others a dinner?" he asked simply.

"Lord love you, sir! Yes. The landlord at the Old Golden Cross will give good dinners in Watson's empty warehouse for a shilling a head."

"A shilling a head! Where can I find this place?"

Led by his uncouth new acquaintance,

Henry soon reached the Old Golden Cross, and there found out from the landlord that nothing was easier than to give a dinner to as many people as he liked at one shilling a head.

"Well, how many can you find room for?"

"Oh, a thousand if need be."

"But where will the thousand come from?"

"No difficulty as to that, sir. I'll just send round at night to all the bridges, where they're sleeping, and to the dock-yards in the morning, where they go to look for employment. We'll easily get 1000, with women and children."

"All right; have dinner for a thousand, then, to-morrow at 12.30. That'll be 50*l*., won't it? There's the money. Now, good day. Mind you do it well. I'll be with you in plenty of time."

Henry laughed as he turned away—"Well, that's the best business I ever remember. It's not so very long since I spent 50*l.* over a dinner for fifteen men—and now I'm going to feed 1000! Talk about loaves and fishes!"

The morrow came, and with it the motley throng, all seated on benches in and outside the huge warehouse—long stout tables extended from end to end of the place in close rows. It was a wonder how so many beings could be accommodated. What squalor and poverty was there! What hunger and terrible eagerness for food, mastering almost the bounds of order! Ah! in that crowd of misery what a compendium was there of the world's cruelty; how many hearts that once beat high, how many hopes almost or quite broken now, how many blighted lives and crushed aspirations—where now the

ghastly borderland between crime and starvation is reached, and the soul turns against the cold laws of man, for nature cannot bear the sight of wife and children dying of hunger!

It was not much that the guests looked at Henry for a while—each was absorbed in doing the best justice to a really substantial dinner, and Henry sat down with them and did his best to feed also, for the sake of companionship, though he wondered how on earth his fellow-diners could contrive to eat so much.

But at last something of a lull came—the constant replenishment of trenchers began to gradually cease—an appearance of contentment had stolen over the features of the assembly—and the landlord, who stood at Henry's right hand, said, "It's usual, sir, to say a word or two on such an occasion."

"Is it? Well, then, here goes."

"My friends" (here the people recognizing in Henry the giver of the feast, applaud frantically), "I dare say you think I'm going to preach to you and all that sort of thing. I'm not going to do anything of the sort; I'm going to thank you for having given me a real pleasure, and I won't mar that pleasure by giving you any ill-timed advice which might interfere with your digestions. I have been rich, and I have been as poor as you, and I am now at any rate able to do what little I have done to-day. I know what your trials and tempations are, and I say it's wonderful how decent and well you all look. I can't help giving you one little bit of advice—Never believe the men who tell you that you will be the better for treating rich men as your enemies; never believe those who tell you that the land-

owning or any other class is opposed to you; never trust the word of a Radical. United with those whose fortune has been happier, you may yet stand; divided from them you *must* fall. Poverty is a hard master, and it is ill reasoning on an empty stomach—but English men, women, and children are the gamest and best plucked people in the world; and I ask each one of you to keep a good heart yet; and remember that you have your best friend in a very high place—Mr. Disraeli. There, good-bye, and God bless you! Vote, when you get votes, as Mr. Disraeli wants—and maybe you'll see a brighter day."

So Henry left his new friends—who cheered him lustily—and perhaps thought something of his words.

CHAPTER XII.

"Too late! too late!"

The weeks passed on, and there was a cold winter. Henry had found Matt Dawson to be the kindest of friends in the matter of the filly, Hero; for the genial trainer, well knowing the difficulties of his employer, had written suggesting that he himself would buy half of Hero for 1500*l.*, and in future run her in his own name, and on the half-profits system. Needless to say Henry was very glad to accept this offer, for until he drew his stakes from Weatherby's he had never felt sure that they might not be attached by old Marks or some one else. He had now quite a comfortable sum to go on with, though

the legal shadow of the Great Jumbo (West) Company still overhung him, with what prospect he knew not.

Just prior to the rising of Parliament, Aspland, having suddenly effected an entrance to the House, had administered the oath to himself, and taken part in a division, to the great scandal of all men. The consequence was obvious. The seat was declared vacant, and a fresh writ, though moved for, was not as yet fixed as to date of return.

Enough and to spare of difficulty beset the Government with the Fenian difficulty, culminating as it did with the Clerkenwell outrage and the Manchester murders, and showing up plainly the sympathy of the so-called advanced (?) party of British statesmen with the perpetrators of these atrocities.

Henry had entered to some extent into

his old life, but with a little more definite purpose than heretofore, and it was not without some feeling of shame that he met Disraeli once more at the Carlton. The great man greeted him in the most imperturbable fashion, as if they had seen one another only the previous day, and made some commonplace remark which was absolutely excruciating to Henry, whose nerves were wrought up for something far more momentous. Feeling at a loss what to say, he at last broke out with,—

"I have not yet had the opportunity of congratulating you, Mr. Disraeli, on the Representation of the People's Act."

"You think it a subject for congratulation, do you? Well, if you mean that, there is some hope for you."

"I trust there are very few of the party now who do not appreciate what you have done."

Disraeli half smiled, and then said with something not immeasurably removed from a sneer, "They have been sorely tried. We must not ask them to appreciate just yet."

"You mean they want more education?"

"Ha! you have caught at that word, have you? It was a little ill-judged though not ill-chosen, when I used it the other day. Yes, perhaps they will have to be educated a little more. But you—what have you been doing?"

Henry knew not what to say.

"Ah, well, no need to answer; for I know. I have not lost sight of you since you were disappointed at Harrington. I'm glad you were disappointed."

"Glad! Mr. Disraeli?"

"Yes, because you might not otherwise have known what stuff you were made of.

A disappointed man becomes a Radical—if he is a coward."

"Well, thank Heaven! I'm no Radical, but I fear I've been a very idle Tory."

"Idleness is charming in its way; it only becomes a crime when it interferes with opportunity."

"Ah! but how are we to recognize opportunity?"

"Seize everything that looks like it. Never mind if you make a mistake when you are young. You thought you had an opportunity the last Harrington election—well, I thought I had, three or four times. Oh, I can tell you I was in greater straits than you were when I first contested an election at Shrewsbury—sheriff's officers waiting outside, and so forth. What did it matter? My time came at last; so will yours—and, by-the-way, you will have to

contest Harrington again in a week or so. The date will be fixed to-morrow."

"Yes, I'll go!" cried Henry; "but surely some better candidate—"

"If you don't believe in yourself—"

"Oh, no, no; it's not that—I hope I do —I'm sure I do; and I'll win this time."

"Well, go along, then, and coach yourself up in Blue Books."

. . . . .

Sure enough, next day it was announced that the Harrington election would take place in a fortnight's time, and Henry lost not a moment in hurrying down to the scene of his former *fiasco*. Aspland was in the field before him, and already trading on the instinct of obstinacy which he flattered himself would make the men of Harrington stand by him, just because it seemed a grand thing to be opposing the whole House of Commons.

Henry had many difficulties to contend with. Beau's disgraceful escapade had brought the family into disrepute, and his own failure on the previous occasion to pay his expenses was a terrible blot in the eyes of common-sense matter-of-fact electors. But he formed up his old committee, with John Harrison, senior, at the head of it, and not a single one of the Stick-in-the mud division in the whole lot; and he paid 1000*l.* into the hands of the gentleman who was to act as his agent—a fact which went very far to inspire confidence. Not one single appeal for support did he make to the county families; they might take him or leave him; he would not, he said, insult them by suggesting that they could possibly vote for Aspland; and yet such is ducal influence that there were many who should have known better who, obedient to the dictates of Beau, tried

to persuade themselves that Aspland was a martyr to religious intolerance instead of the apostle of intolerance of religion; and it was hinted that even the Harrington vicar was one of those who would support the atheist. The living of Harrington was in Beau's presentation.

So the few days before the election sped on amid ceaseless canvassing, speaking, and so forth; amid it all came the news that Beau had been married to Mrs. Lee Fenwick, and then that he was coming home to assist Aspland by the moral influence of his presence. Even this—such is the *status* of a duke—was not met by the expressed disgust which it deserved—nay, it rather operated to bring over some of the waverers to Aspland. Were they not most of them Beau's tenants?

Dorothy and Mary were now together

at the Squire's, for of course the latter could not remain to receive her new sister-in-law, and by much coaxing they had persuaded old D'Aguilar that he really must vote for Henry. He had intended to abstain altogether; but after all, he thought, anything was better than letting Aspland in.

Nor did the two girls cease here, for they diligently canvassed the district and brought many old fogeys to reason, though Henry knew nothing of it; and on the eventful day they found themselves quietly ensconced in a room at Trueman's Hotel, to survey the scene, and mark the result.

One election is, or rather was, much like another. The same surging crowds and display of colours; the same orating of the rival candidates from their hotels; the same cheering as voters are brought up to poll; the same hooting, groaning,

fighting, and drinking! Thus the day wore on, and Dorothy, looking from behind the curtains of the room where they were, had seen Henry in constant activity amid his friends—had heard him speak two or three times from the window close by, and albeit his eloquence was not that of Demosthenes, there was some nerve force about it, some grip on the hearts of his audience—something in sympathy with the people that elicited the most genuine cheers, and more than once brought tears to Dorothy's eyes, though the subject was not a sad one; it was, just as we are most deeply moved by acting that seems real, quite apart from any melancholy meaning.

But the day was darkening now, and the hours chased one another to the close of the poll. Wilder and wilder grew the excitement, as the now scanty voters were

brought in. Henry's committee gave him a majority of twenty-seven. Aspland's stated their man led by seven. The moments sped away, and the colours of each new voter were scrutinized with desperate eagerness ; at last the end came, and the maddening period of suspense.

Dorothy and Mary sat for an hour, and at last the former said,—

"I can't bear this any longer. I'll go down and ask Mr. D'Aguilar when we shall know the result."

So off she hurried, and on her way down the long passage chanced, by some strange instinct, to peep in through a door that was nearly half open. It was one of the sitting-rooms of the hotel, and some one was there—sitting at the table, on which his head lay, supported on one arm.

He did not move, and a second glance

told her it was Henry. A telegram was on the table at his side, and through no idle curiosity, but sincerely anxious to find out what was the matter, Dorothy stole quietly up, and glanced at the missive as it lay there. It ran thus—

"Jones & Barber, 14, Queen St., E.C.,

to

Lord Henry Gainsborough, Harrington.

"Regret judgment given to-day, holding Directors of Great Jumbo (West) Company personally liable. Can you see your way to find twenty thousand? Cannot settle for less. Parties threaten bankruptcy proceedings."

Dorothy felt half inclined to burst into tears, half inclined to rouse Henry and comfort him, and then summoning all her resolution she went quietly out—back to the room where Lady Mary was; she had

been unable to reach Mr. D'Aguilar, she said; and thus the two sat on very silently while the time passed slowly, but passed at length, and there went up a loud and deafening cheer, while dense masses came surging up towards the hotel, and old D'Aguilar rushed into the room, pleased enough now, though he had begun with an ill-grace—crying,—

"Gainsborough . . . 1750
Aspland . . . . 1721!"

Dorothy rose to her feet, half joy, half sorrow, and in the impulse of the moment kissed the good old gentleman; then, to his intense astonishment, burst into tears; and meanwhile the crowd outside were roaring and shouting themselves hoarse for Henry, and every one was inquiring for him—he must make a speech, of course—where was he—ay, where?

CHAPTER XIII.

"The action of woman on man's destiny is unceasing."
Sibyl.

How strange it is that people quarrel or think they quarrel for such trivial reasons! The longer an estrangement is continued, the more difficult it is to put it right, and each party avoids the other, not out of dislike, but out of a feeling of culpability.

Dorothy would in her own heart have given worlds to be good friends with Henry again; and he, when he thought of her, was very sorry indeed that they had ever fallen out, yet nothing but a lucky chance could bring them together.

What a slight cause of dispute, too,—or rather no cause at all! The intimacy of

Henry with Miss L'Eclair; a mere ephemeral folly—nothing!

And now at the very moment when he had been elected for Harrington, Dorothy in another room of the same hotel was tormenting herself with the knowledge that a demand under threat of bankruptcy had been made on him to pay £20,000, which of course he couldn't pay; and the people outside were all shouting and cheering in expectation that he would make a speech.

She who in the passing glimpse of him, as narrated in the last chapter, had seen him lying utterly prostrate from this £20,000 blow, could not imagine that he would face the people. She was mistaken, however, for suddenly she saw him step out on to the balcony amid deafening applause, pass his hand wearily over his forehead, and then commence firmly enough:—

"My Friends,—I am dead beat by this day. You can understand that, and can excuse my saying much. I have only to thank you, which I do most heartily. I knew you would do the right thing, and, believe me, if all goes well with me, you shall find that I will do my duty by you all. You have done a great thing. You have declared by your votes that Toryism is not in the monopoly of a class, be it ducal or otherwise, but that it is the policy of all for all; you have shown that religion has not yet ceased to dominate public life. God bless you, my friends! Be sure I will ever stand fast for the cause of the people, be the difficulties what they may. Inspired and animated by your confidence, I will face anything and everything, and if you stick to me, I will never fail you. Now, good-bye! Thank you all,—and that is all."

There was something in the way which this curious little speech was delivered, something in the abrupt manner it ended that impressed every one who heard it. But Dorothy, who knew the truth, well knew also the load of grief and despair under which Henry was struggling, for to be bankrupt, as every one is aware, disqualifies from a seat in Parliament, and while she admired the courage with which he braved the situation, her heart bled for his trouble.

What could she do? £20,000, was far beyond her power to raise; yet she felt sure her good old father, could she but get at him, would let her have this or anything else she asked; but then old Mr. Desanges was in America, and she was a weak, helpless girl.

Nevertheless, on the very next morning did she make some excuse of going to pay

a visit to an old friend, and set off by an early train to London, with very slight ideas of what to do there, but still an instinctive feeling that she *could* do something.

It was a deadly cold day, in the depth of winter, and she was half perished when she reached King's Cross, and sent her encumbrances into the hotel; but it was now 3 p.m., no time to lose; and away she drove to 14, Queen Street, E.C., to the office of Messrs. Jones and Barber. There she entered, and was kept waiting a long time, with nothing but *The Times* to amuse her; but at last she was ushered into the room of Mr. Barber—a lean, hatchet-faced man, who eyed her suspiciously.

"I have called, Mr. Barber, to see if nothing can be done to settle this debt of Lord Henry Gainsborough."

Mr. Barber began to look interested.

"May I ask, madam, in what capacity you represent his lordship?"

"What does that matter? I want to settle this thing—surely that is enough!"

"Oh, quite enough, of course; pray, what do you propose to do?"

"Well, I haven't got the money now, but can get it from my father."

"And he?"—

"Is in America."

"An American?"

"Yes."

"My dear young lady, how can you expect us to settle anything on such a basis? Why, there is absolutely no security, none that is in any way tangible."

"I will give you my own note of hand."

"That is not worth the paper it is written on. I am sorry to say this, more especially as Lord Henry, in whom I take an interest,

has so fair an advocate—but business is business!"

Here Mr. Barber leered horribly on Dorothy, and she, half inclined to cry, half to fly in a rage—dashed out of the room and left him.

What a position it was for her to be thus alone in London! But she cared little for that if she could only succeed, and now there was nothing to do but go back to the hotel for the night and think.

It is no use trying to force ideas. They come naturally, when least expected, and it was not till Dorothy had dozed off, in sheer despair of success, that a sudden fancy came upon her to go direct to Mr. Disraeli on the matter, and appeal to him. It was one of those fancies that strike home at once, and she resolved to do it. A strange feat, truly, for a girl barely out of her teens!

She knew that Disraeli was now at Hughenden, and so the next morning, without more ado, she started from the Great Western Station for High Wycombe, chartered a fly there, drove through the town, passing by the historic "Lion," which still stands boldly on the porch of the hotel —and so along the valley, with the chalky brick house, now well in view—through the lodge gates, over the brook with its numerous trout, and up the hill to the gates —then round the carriage drive to the front door—and oh, how her heart was beating now!

She had never met either Mr. or Mrs. Disraeli, and she was at a loss to know which she should ask for; but her business was with him, so to him she sent in a card, with a request to see him on especial business.

Presently she was ushered in, noticing

many portraits in the hall as she passed; and, looking forward, she could see through the glass doors the pretty lawn, with the view extending far beyond. Passing through a door on the left into the library, she found herself in the presence of Mr. Disraeli, who bowed, and waited for her to speak.

After sundry excuses for this unceremonious intrusion, Dorothy began,—

"I hardly know how to explain, Mr. Disraeli; but I am an old friend of Lord Henry Gainsborough."

"Indeed! A most promising young fellow. I am glad he was elected."

"Yes, that's just it: and now I fear he may be disqualified."

"What! is he still in debt, then?"

"Oh, yes! But how wonderful of you to guess it! And—and I want to settle it all, and I don't know how."

Disraeli looked at her more closely now.

"Tell me," he said, "are you engaged to him? You must not mind my asking!"

"Oh, no; we have never met for years!"

"A quarrel?"

"Not exactly;—but—oh, I don't know, we are quite apart, utterly; only I do want to see him get on as he deserves."

Disraeli smiled.

"You are a true-hearted woman," he said, "and if I can, I will help you; what is it you propose to do?"

"Well, they say he can be set straight for £20,000, and I can't pay that now, but my father, Mr. Desanges, who is now in America, can, and will when he hears from me."

"What! Desanges. He used to be a great friend of the late Duke?"

"Yes, that is why I have lived with the family."

"My dear child, there should be no difficulty about this. Won't Lord Henry's solicitors arrange it?"

"No, indeed; they were quite insulting to me about the idea when I saw them yesterday."

"I suppose it is not a tangible security—as they would say; but I know your father well enough—why!—ah! well, this thing must be settled. Stay, I'll write you a letter."

And he proceeded at once to write.

"There," he continued, handing Dorothy the note, "I think you will find those solicitors very different. I have asked them to do what you want. They arranged a more difficult thing than that for me long ago—you can depend on them, and I hope—ah! well, come and see Mrs. Disraeli."

Dorothy took the letter, addressed to Messrs. Paxter, Tose, and Morton, with

sincere thanks, and passed on into the charming drawing-room where Mrs. Disraeli was. But Dorothy's head was in a whirl; she hardly could answer coherently; she would not stay for lunch; she must get back at once, and back she accordingly went, bearing the recollection of the smile on Disraeli's face as he bade her good-bye, and his last words to her, which were, "Lord Henry is a lucky man—almost as lucky as I have been. Let me hear what happens."

Then the old rattletrap fly hurried her off to the station, and she was presently back in town.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Out—out are the lights—out all!
And over each quivering form
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm;
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy 'Man,'
And its hero the Conqueror Worm."

Poe.

Mr. Aspland was sorely annoyed by his defeat at the Harrington election. He had counted on the obstinacy of his constituents to return him once more, from the mere fact that they would take a pleasure in opposing the House of Commons.

After hearing the declaration of the poll, and having said a few ungracious words to the people, sneering at Henry, and hinting

at the possibility of his not representing them for long, he dashed out of his hotel, hot, angry, and nervous, scarcely knowing whither he went, anxious only to avoid the crowd and the commiseration of his friends.

Half unconsciously he took the path leading towards the village of Countryholme, that path by which John Harrison and Polly had walked a year ago—that path which led to the plantation by the steep banks of the Esk, where he himself had stood with Mrs. Lee Fenwick one well-remembered time, when the last echo of departing purity had died away from her, and she had embarked once and for ever on the downward course.

It was a bitterly cold night, and the snow lay several inches thick on the ground, and was falling slightly all the while. The moon shone mistily on the scene, and some of the stars still struggled to show them-

selves. Aspland thought nothing of the weather. He strode on, wrapped in angry thoughts, until now he had reached the very place on the banks of the Esk which we have just mentioned, and intuitively he stopped and looked across the river on to the slope of moorland, which loomed blackly up against the gloomy sky.

Perhaps some thought of all that had been came upon him at that moment; perhaps it was some recollection of the words of the old mad woman, spoken on that spot, "Ha, ha! I saw you dead, and the river took you;" perhaps it was only the cold; but he shuddered, and looked nervously round.

At that moment a dark figure advancing from the opposite direction came suddenly on him, and the two confronted one another with a start. Aspland was the first to recover himself.

"John Harrison!" he cried.

John Harrison—for it was he, though sadly worn, wan, dishevelled, and disreputable in appearance—replied, in a low hard tone,—

"Yes, that is my name; and now I have something to say to *you*."

An involuntary shiver passed through Aspland at the moment—why he could not tell, but a presentiment of evil hung over him, and he waited silently to hear what would follow.

"John Aspland," said the strange figure, "for months I have been an outcast, nay, worse than outcast, for I have been one against whom the charge of murder has been made, and have been in fact flying from what is called justice. It was I who shot the Duke of Countryholme, and Peter Stobbs. Nay, do not start; God knows, you have no reason to;—forgive me men-

tioning such a name—but I tell you once more that I was guilty of that murder, and now hear how it occurred. I was among the earliest of your disciples, and from you I learned to ignore the existence of a God, and to abominate any social or other superiority among men. You taught me to think that no one was better than I, and that no power outside the present world could control me.

"Especially on one occasion, you spoke of the iniquity of the Game Laws, and, persuaded by you, I did not hesitate to associate with a gang of poachers, and to go with them upon that fatal night to the Duke of Countryholme's covers, each yard of which I knew so well. There is no need to dwell on this; we were surprised by the Duke and his keepers. My companions, more experienced than I, escaped; but I was seen, and recognized by the Duke and

Peter Stobbs, who confronted me. There was no one else near, and it was then that the black result of your teaching took hold of my heart. If there be no hereafter, and no one near to give evidence on earth, why should I not kill these two men? I had my gun ready, and as these thoughts flashed through me I raised it and fired, one barrel killing the Duke, who was within three yards of me, the other, old Stobbs, who was almost as near; and then I turned and ran, meeting, to my horror, Polly, on the outskirts of the wood, so that with her I had to go back to the awful scene, though nobody ever suspected me, as we stood there after the police had been summoned, and the lanterns shed their ghastly light over the dead men.

"This was your doing, John Aspland, not mine. Don't turn away; I have more to tell you; that girl Polly, whose father I

had killed, I made no scruple to betray, following your doctrines on the relation of the sexes, and it was there that I fell, in a worldly sense, for she, bringing to play that woman's wit which ever gets the best of man when it is really aroused, contrived to procure the certain proofs of my guilt of that murder. She denounced me before my own family, and I fled, with difficulty escaping arrest at the hands of my brother; since then I have wandered a homeless wayfarer about the country, until the news of this election brought me here once more, for I felt sure that I might so gain a safe chance of meeting you."

This story was told in a quiet, firm, decisive fashion, and John Harrison all the while had his eyes fixed on Aspland as a man has who, after long search, finds a mortal enemy in his power.

Aspland rapidly cast off any appearance of apprehension, and simply said,—

"My good fellow, you are beside yourself. Pray go home, and don't trouble me with such nonsense."

The last word seemed to operate with an electric touch on John Harrison, who sprang on him and seized him, at first only by the arm and the collar.

"Curse you!" he cried. "Dare you say that it is only nonsense to have wrought murder, ruined virtue, and wrecked lives! By heaven—if there be a heaven—I could kill you where we stand! What are you on your own showing better than a worm, which can be crushed and killed for ever?"

Aspland was a man of not the mildest temper, and he had had much to ruffle him that day, so he roughly shook himself free from this unmannerly attack, pushed his assailant violently back, and cried,—

"You scoundrel! I will have you arrested on your own confession this very night."

In another moment there was a terrible struggle, the two men were down on the pathway, each fighting, as it were, for dear life.

In the gloom of the night no one could have seen which was uppermost, there was nothing to be heard but panting and half-stifled imprecations.

For fully five minutes the struggle continued, the sound getting gradually less, then was heard a splash in the waters of the Esk, and all was still.

At that moment the moon again shone out through the dull sky, and in the short period of clear light the spectator—had there been one—could have seen the figure of John Harrison, standing grimly visible, like an awful spectre, on the brink of that

precipitous bank, and there below, just for a moment, a white, distorted face, that rises barely to the surface—it is John Aspland!

No more. It has gone.

The cloud passes over the moon, the snow falls faster, the winter night holds her cruel sway over the earth, and the deed that has been done is outside the ken of man, foretold only by the mad woman years ago.

CHAPTER XV.

"The snow shall be their winding-sheet."
Campbell.

JOHN HARRISON stood gazing aghast down into the waters of the Esk, where Aspland had now passed out of sight, and then, in frenzied agony, wrung his hands and cried, "Another murder!—and by me! Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do?".

He looked terror-stricken around, lest any one should have seen the deed, but the night was dark again now, and the wind blew more fiercely, driving the sleet and the snow till it cut like whips against the face of any one meeting it.

The wretched man had known no peace since that day when Polly Stobbs had de-

nounced him. The fear of arrest for murder was always before him, and though this fear was, as we know, baseless; yet it was as terrible to him as if he were really pursued by the officers of justice.

Like all men without a guiding principle, he was a coward at heart, and the conviction that there was no life to come made the thought of leaving the present life inexpressibly terrible. He was an example of the common effects of Atheistical teaching. Deprived of every belief and faith which make men happy, he had received nothing in their stead. What had once been his soul was now an abhorred vacuum, round which circled nothing but sickening doubts and unavailing regrets. So strange is it that men will allow themselves to be thus infected and destroyed by the contamination of self-seeking scoundrels, who care not

for the shame of their Atheistic profession so long as it brings grist to the mill.

John Harrison, weak now with prolonged anxiety, and his recent awful struggle, horror-stricken at his last act of vengeance, and terrified at the thought of capture, was but in poor condition to make his way any distance to shelter on that awful night. Yet somewhere he must go, and he thought that if he could reach Harrington, it would not be difficult to find safe lodging for the night, and be far away next day. At least he would make the attempt, and thus he staggered off along the path by which Aspland had come, and presently emerged from the partial protection of the wood, out into the open where the track leads on Harrington.

On he trudged through the bitter blast, which grew momentarily more fearful; on

through the black night with the snow drifting up quickly in great hills, and the possibility of keeping the path rapidly vanishing. The fierce gusts seemed to come from all quarters, as if Æolus had once more let the whole lot loose; at first the wind had seemed at his back; it was now all round him as it were, and the blinding sleet bewildered him as he struggled forward.

Those who have been out, even in an ordinary snowstorm, are well aware how difficult it is to face wind and snow combined, but this night was something quite abnormal, and a feeling of despair began very soon to take possession of John Harrison—a thought that, perhaps, he might never reach shelter at all—might die of cold.

The bare idea made him half frantic, and he struggled forward, though by this

time in the darkness he had lost all touch of the pathway. He tried to go straight on, and fancied he was doing so, but the wintry blast howled around him, and the snow benumbed him till his mind was in perplexity, and he knew not whither he went. Still he pushed on.

At one time up to his waist in a drift, at another stumbling over unseen obstacles, wearied, weakened, and almost collapsing, he fought his way against the elements as a man will always fight for his life. Step by step—still moving, though the blood seems chilled to his very heart, and his legs well-nigh refuse their office. Step by step, still forward ; somewhither —forward, as it seems ; yet who knows ?

Do the thoughts at a time like this range back to other days and recall happier seasons ? do they make us reflect on opportunities lost and on faults

committed? A little, perhaps, but not much, so long as the fierce struggle for life continues. The mind is too occupied in the present—the sole thought is self-preservation.

Yet as the strength weakens, as the bodily vigour fades, as the muscles cease to work, and physical power breaks down, there does in the few moments between that time and the end come a soft dreamy lassitude where no pain is, and the record of past things flits before us, bringing in its train the image of many a well-known face and the touch of many a pleasing fancy.

And to this wretched creature, in the grips of the winter wind, fighting and failing, there was now but little remaining of the pang of dying energy. For fully an hour or more had he maintained the fight, which to his ill-nourished frame was an over-

whelming test. Slower and slower moved his steps; a groan of sullen agony or a hopeless utterance of fear now and again escaped him. Slower and slower still. It is awful to contemplate this poor weak sinner in his conflict with doom.

But it is all over at last. He has sunk down on the ground there in the hollow down the hill. May his last thoughts have some ray of happiness! May the scales fall from his eyes and reveal to him but for a moment the beauty of the dear old life before the blight of Aspland, the Atheist and Radical, had fallen on him, and let him find the long-lost truth once more, so that his spirit may yet carry away the precious jewel when it departs from the poor worn-out frame!

He lies very still now. The wind blows louder than ever, as if the demons of the night were holding revelry over their

victim. The snow drifts up, and in a few minutes there is but a white mound in that place. All that remains of the miserable, weak, and erring man lies buried there, and it remains but to trust that the whiteness of his canopy is a sign that some mercy may be extended even to him.

CHAPTER XVI.

"On horror's head horrors accumulate."
Shakespeare.

A FEW days later Beau returned home with the wife of his shame, late Mrs. Lee Fenwick, and had the audacity to drive with some ostentation through the principal street of Harrington. Such is the power of the Peerage, that not even then was any loud disapproval expressed by the people. Here was a woman whose former husband was now living as the vicar of the parish close by, known through many years to all, and by all respected. Here was she flaunting in their midst as the Duchess, and because she was a Duchess they had

not the courage to express their disapproval.

Yet beneath the somewhat brazen exterior, maybe, both she and Beau were alive to the ignominy of their position. Not all the doctrines of Radical philosophers or self-seeking agnostics could quite crush in him the feeling of what was really due to a position such as his, the voice of conscience was not wholly dead —though it was very still and very small.

At times he half shuddered as he looked at the woman by his side and remembered the days of his father.

She, too, was painfully moved by the thought of approaching the place where she had spent the honoured years of her married life, and where the pernicious promptings of Aspland at first accomplished her ruin.

Beau spoke little as they drove along,

each with rapt and unpleasant thoughts. The novelty of marriage had worn off, leaving only the bitter flavour of disgrace, and this was to him a more important matter than to her, for she after all was a Duchess, and that was something, while he had but degraded himself.

So they drove on through the broad market-place of Harrington, looking half askance at those who were assembled to gaze on them, and not altogether sure what reception they might meet with—a pitiable exhibition truly.

At last he broke silence: "These fools have elected that brother of mine. I suppose you heard?"

"No, indeed," said she; for she had taken no note of what was going on in her native place. "Is it possible? and is Mr. Aspland rejected?"

"Yes, that he certainly is; and, by-the-

way, why have you always taken such an interest in Aspland?"

"I do not know; I cannot tell what makes you think I do take an interest in him."

"Ah!" cried Beau; "do you think I have not seen that there is some sort of understanding between you and him? I have sometimes believed I was the victim of both of you."

His wife started: "How dare you say that? It is mean and contemptible; what interest could Aspland have in my marrying you? Why, he was opposed to it!"

"By what right?"

She was growing angry now at his tone, and answered shortly, "By a good one."

Beau turned, and looked at her with a sharp, keen scrutiny.

"Am I to understand, then," said he, "that I have encumbered myself with the property of John Aspland?"

"You can understand what you like. I shall only say that in point of intellect, and all that becomes a man, John Aspland is your better."

"Don't speak so loud," said Beau. "People will hear you, we can talk of this when we get home. A pleasant home will it not be? It is a pity you have lost Aspland!"

"Lost him! How lost?" said she.

Before Beau could answer they turned a corner into the road leading out of Harrington, and saw, not more than a hundred yards away, a crowd approaching, with something in their midst. It was one of those things which instinctively produce horror before you know what it is, and so the young Duke and his wife were

reduced to silence as they drove towards it. What can it be? They can see now that a piece of old tarpaulin covers the object in the midst of the throng, and that several men are carrying it along, as is now apparent, on a hurdle.

The crowd make way as Beau drives up, and the bearers of the hurdle step hastily on one side to let it pass.

As ill-luck would have it, one of them stumbles in this movement and falls, dropping his burden, and thus upsetting the rest.

There is a murmur of horror from the people, as the hurdle thus tilted over rolls its burden off on to the road, and there, stark and staring in the sight of all men, lies the corpse of John Aspland, just as it has lately been taken from the river.

There is a piercing shriek from the carriage, and then the horses, urged to full

speed, are seen galloping away towards Bolingbroke Park.

Such is the home-coming of the Duke and his bride.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Audentem Forsque Venusque juvant."—*Ovid.*

Return we to Henry, who on being elected for Harrington, found himself threatened with bankruptcy in the event of his not finding £20,000, which, seeing that he had little or no security to give, seemed an altogether impossible sum. Just at the moment of success; having struggled through poverty, and got his head fairly above the surface as it were, to find himself thus confronted with a crushing liability was indeed a knock-down blow, and for a day or two he did indeed feel as though the game was up.

Presently, however, on his return to town he found that the enemy were pressing on with all possible speed, and the bare idea of being attacked in this way roused him to action. He would not fall without an effort; he would try to rake the money together somewhow from his friends among the party; he had done something in rescuing the seat from Aspland, surely he might be assisted in retaining it.

Alas! he little knew the Conservative party. Inheriting as they do the best traditions of Toryism, they have none the less let these sleep, while they have allowed the base elements of greed, avarice, and self-interest to grow to abnormal proportions. Selfish to the last degree, they think of little or nothing but the security of their property, and to this they cling with shocking tenacity, oblivious of the duties which property entails, and of the national

service which it behoves the Tory party always to perform. Senselessly proud, ridiculously arrogant; apathetic in everything that concerns the nation, energetic in everything that concerns themselves—such are your modern Conservatives.

There is more "go" about a single Radical than there is about a hundred of these poor mutton-heads; but the Tory policy, though seen through a glass very darkly, still is theirs, so one must needs stand by them, contemptible wretches though they be.

Yes, contemptible wretches! Men who dare not take office at a national crisis, men who dare not face a public outcry of the moment, men who will lie down and sleep rather than be up and doing, who will lament opportunities past, while they studiously miss those of the present.

Verily your modern milk-and-water Conservative, who will sacrifice nothing

for his politics—who indeed thinks those politics simply mean sticking to the *status quo*—that man exceeds all other political persons in infamy. He is a sham, a humbug, and won't pay a cent for his convictions—indeed he has none but those of self. A Radical will always back his politics with his purse, but your common brute Conservative, never.

One or two inquiries soon convinced Henry that he could get no money in consideration of his having rescued a seat for the party, nor yet on account of the prospect that the seat would inevitably be lost if he became bankrupt. He only mentioned the matter to a few of the controlling authorities, and he was very quickly told that there was no special fund for what he wanted; that, privately-speaking, members were themselves hard up, and such like absurdity.

He cared very little; indeed, was rather glad, as it showed him the utter hollowness of the men with whom he was to associate, and forewarned him as to their worth. The mere bitterness of being rejected, as it were, by them nerved him to work his way out himself, and when a man is really determined he seldom fails to find an opportunity.

Henry's own solicitors were no use at all; indeed they were beginning to clamour for their own costs—such is the paltry spirit of their kind—but quite by chance he was introduced to the well-known Parliamentary agent, Mr. Holmes, and in a confidential discourse with that worthy gentleman he explained his position.

Mr. Holmes could have told a good deal about a greater man than Henry, and indeed did so, but when it came to the

point—What do you want?—£20,000, and on no tangible security?—why then even the worthy Holmes confessed himself not strong enough for such a burden; but, said he, "If any one will do it, it will be Paxter, Tose, and Morton. I'll give you a letter to them."

Nothing stimulates a true heart like despair—or rather what would be despair to a soft one. Pin a man fairly in a corner, and you will see the stuff he is made of. Henry had now received a bankruptcy summons, and the time was passing rapidly; he knew he was looked upon as lost; he knew he was reviled by the Opposition, and that not a soul, probably, thought him capable of escaping from his difficulties. These very thoughts made a different man of him, and he went forth to tackle Messrs. Paxter, Tose, and Morton, not as a man going on a wild-goose chase

among strangers, but as one who means to carry his point.

Let us not go too much into the details of that interview, which is now historic. For a long time Henry was closeted with one of the partners, whom by sheer energy and determination he won over to believe in him and to agree that the money should be raised if it were at all possible; "but, my lord," said he, "in spite of all good wishes, I fear very much we may fail. Have you no one whose name would improve the security?"

"No one, I am sorry to say."

"Well, we must see what can be done; excuse me a moment, I will just go and consult on the subject."

So Henry was left to peruse the *Times*, though not one word did he really grasp. Who does not know the fever of excitement which makes reading impossible?

It seemed a long time before the partner came back, but presently he did arrive, and with a curious smile on his countenance. Henry looked at him in an agony of suspense really, but to all appearance in quiet interrogation.

"I think we can arrange it all for you, my lord; indeed, I am glad to say that I feel sure we can."

Henry fairly gasped with relief and astonishment.

"What—what am I to do in the way of security?"

"Oh! we will take your note of hand, payable on demand. The security, I find, is quite sufficient."

"But are you sure you are not under a misapprehension?"

"Not at all, I assure you."

"Then I must have been," said Henry, "all the time I pauperized on nothing at all, and couldn't raise a fiver!"

"That is very likely, my lord. The security satisfies us, at any rate, and you may regard your trouble as over."

"Upon my word, you are good fellows, and you shall never regret this."

"Only business, my lord; only business. Good-day; glad to have been of service to you."

And so the bewildered Henry leaves the office; but as he steps out into the passage there is something of a scuffle, and a vision of a petticoat rushing into one of the other rooms—the door of which bangs. "Gay dogs, these solicitors!" thinks Henry as he passes rapidly out and goes along to the Carlton.

Inside that room just mentioned is Dorothy, in a torrent of tears, having barely escaped encountering Henry, half mad with herself for letting the elderly partner see her give way to such weakness; half distracted too at the fancy of

having been so near him and yet so instinctively, as it were, bound to avoid him; and utterly glad in a sense at having, thanks to Mr. Disraeli's introduction, furnished, unknown to Henry, the security which carried the business through for him.

She had stipulated that he must not know one word as to this, and in one sense the purest pleasure of all was hers when she was told that he had gone away fully persuaded that the 20,000*l.* was to be raised on the sole security of his own name.

"It will *make* him believe in himself," she thought.

Meanwhile, a draft on her good old father had been signed by her for 20,000*l.* and would proceed in due course to New York, she writing to explain it as best she could, though she well knew he would accept it without explanation.

Fortunate is the young lady who has such a father!

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Alas! the love of woman! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing."

Byron.

"Can this be death?"

Pope.

The great snowstorm in the neighbourhood of Harrington was a thing of the past, but the cold and frost continued, and the snow lay deep on the ground glistening beneath the sun, which seemed powerless to melt one particle of it.

The hedges scarcely appeared anywhere, except the taller and more ragged of their kind, and the birds were getting into sore straits. Here and there you might espy the black spots in the fields, where coveys of partridges were settled, scratching vainly

for some semblance of food, and growing thinner day by day. Very easy would it be to make a good bag now, but very useless, for the birds would not be fit to eat, so thin and scarecrow-like are they.

Happy is the robin in times of need like this, for he always finds people to feed him, though why it should be so we are unable to determine. Personally the robin is an aggressive, selfish, and insolent bird, but for some reason he is supposed to have a claim on our sympathies which the humble sparrow has not. It may be that in the dim past some primeval robin has done something good, and the robins of to-day feel themselves entitled to live on the reputation of their ancestor, as do so many brainless imbeciles of the human race.

But no more of robins; let us turn to something more attractive. Look, for instance, at Charles Harrison striding

along there through the snow in the direction of Mrs. Stobbs' cottage, followed by his old sheep dog, Watch.

He seems a little aged in the past few months, and well he may he—for not only has he had to bear the dreadful recollection of his brother's sin and his own broken hopes, but his poor father has now had to turn out of the farm, and it has well nigh broken the old man's heart.

It is curious to see him going towards the place where Polly Stobbs is, and there is small wonder that his anxious, careworn expression increases as he draws nearer to it.

But he strides on, and presently knocks at the cottage door.

"Come in," says a somewhat ill-tempered voice; and he enters.

There sits Mrs. Stobbs, and Polly engaged with some needlework. The latter

flushes hotly and then turns deadly pale at the sight of Charles; but Mrs. Stobbs looks sharply at him, and says with some asperity,—

"Lor! Charles Harrison! And what may you want, startling a body by coming so sudden-like?"

"Why, I thought I would just look in to see how you and Polly were."

"Well, well, I should have thought after the harm your family has done us—but there, don't mind me; I've some cleaning to do upstairs. Make yourself at home, Charles Harrison." With this Mrs. Stobbs left the room, ill-tempered out of mere habit rather than in stern reality.

Charles and Polly sat a long time without saying a word. At last he observed that it was cold weather, and she answered that it was; then, as moments passed he seemed to nerve himself for some stronger effort,

and said, "Polly lass, I've often been thinking you must be very lonesome here?"

"It is a little lonely, perhaps; but what does that matter?"

"Matter! Why it isn't good for you or for any one. I can't bear it myself, and—I don't know how to say it right—but could you take up with me?"

Polly started with unconcealed amazement.

"Oh, Charles, you must be mad."

"Ay, ay, perhaps I am; but I've loved you, Polly, always, and in spite of everything, I have, indeed I have; but I see you don't care about me, and so we'll say no more about it."

Polly glanced at him, and saw the semblance of tears in his honest eyes, and she had much ado to avoid fairly breaking down.

"No, no, Charles, don't say I don't care

about you; don't think it, it isn't true. I have always liked you, and now I care too much to—— "

"What?"

"To do you an injury."

"Injury! How can it be injury to do that which I've longed for these many years? Polly, it's you only that can ever make me happy; won't you do so?"

"Now, see here, Charles; it's no use talking, it can't be. You know well enough what a bar there is to it."

At this moment Mrs. Stobbs came suddenly in with the child.

"Polly," she cried, "it's no use my trying to put things to rights with this blessed child for ever waking up and wanting looking to. Take him yourself; he's more bother than he's worth."

And with this she left the fat and smiling infant on its mother's knees. Polly's first

act was to clasp it in her arms and kiss it, heedless of Charles's presence; and then she looked timidly but honestly in his face. Charles was a trifle upset, though he knew well enough of the baby's existence; but he soon recovered himself and said firmly enough—

"And that's what you call a bar, Polly? Now listen to me; believing as I do that the past is past and left not a trace of its madness in you, I say that I ask you with all my heart to be my wife."

Polly burst into tears, but soon recovered herself.

"No; I care too much for you for that. I will not disgrace you. Think if we should ever meet John again—what shame—worse than shame it would be!"

"But if John was gone for ever?"

"Oh, then—but why should you suggest such a thing? He is not gone, and

Charles, dear, you must talk about this no more."

Charles sat gloomy and silent, watching her as she hushed the baby to sleep, and finally put it in the cradle near the fireside. The first shades of evening were beginning to draw in, and at last, with a sigh, he rose to go. "Well, good-bye, Polly; or will you walk a bit of way with me?"

He looked so pained and so earnest that she could not refuse, and, hastily putting on some wraps, she went out with him into the cold, crisp air.

A sort of constraint had fallen on them again, and they talked of comparatively indifferent subjects—the gossip of the day.

"They say," remarked Charles, "the Duchess has gone clean out of her mind."

"What! right down mad?"

"Ay, that she has, and they've been

forced to take her to an asylum. Seeing that Aspland's dead body did it."

"Ay, it might well upset her, if all tales be true. And will the Duke be able to marry again?"

"Not he, so long as she lives; and they say he's so put about, he's going out of the country altogether."

"Well," said Polly, "I don't think many folks hereabouts will be sorry when he's gone. But what do they say about Aspland?"

"At first it was thought he'd tumbled into the river by accident; but there's marks of a struggle on him, and it seems it must have been foul play. What's old Watch scratching at there, I wonder?"

Charles stepped up the beaten pathway on which they were trudging, and waded through the snow to the drift which the old dog was briskly engaged in investigating.

"What is it, lad?"

The dog whined and worked still harder.

"There must be something," thought Charles; and with his big stick he began probing the snow, until suddenly he felt something which made him start, and, stooping down, he scooped the snow away as fast as he could.

"Good heavens! it is a man!" he shouted, as first his hands touched an inanimate form; and by this time Polly had struggled through the snow to his side.

"My lass, my lass! this is no sight for you!" he exclaimed; but she remained gazing at the spot, and he rapidly cleared the snow away from the body.

A man sure enough!—calm as if in sleep, his head pillowed and half buried in one arm. It is with difficulty that Charles can at first get a sight of the face. Presently he manages to disclose it, and

then starts back with a cry of horror. Polly has also caught the sight, and remains staring and speechless.

They have both, it is needless to say, recognized John Harrison in the dead man, who has thus paid the last great penalty for his sins, and but ill-deserves, perhaps, that hearts such as theirs should be wrung by the thought of him, or should in silent sympathy breathe a prayer for his erring soul.

Perhaps the bitterness of this death has in some way made atonement for the past; perhaps by some purifying influence it has left the path smoother for the two wronged ones who remain. It is too early to think of that yet.

* * * * *

By extraordinary chance, Aspland and John Harrison were buried side by side.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Fortes Fortuna adjuvat."

Terence.

A WEEK or two after the events last chronicled, Henry, who was now once more ensconced in comfortable quarters, was surprised by receiving a letter in Beau's handwriting. It was dated from Nice, and ran thus:—

"DEAR HENRY,—I suppose you think it strange my writing, but that doesn't matter. I want just to tell you that my wife is hopelessly insane. I must have been little better for some years, and I don't care to come back home after all that has happened. I think it might be as well for you to live

at the Castle, and look after things. So long as I get plenty of money I don't care.

"Will you do this? I think you will, for it will be a good thing for you now you are a member for Harrington; and recollect I am asking a favour, not seeking to confer one.

"I sometimes think I might have been a better sort to you, but there—it is too late to amend now.

"Send a line here.

"Yours,

"BEAU."

Henry read this letter with very mingled sensations. The first idea was that his brother was seeking to employ him in the capacity of agent, and he felt indignant accordingly. Then the latter part of the letter seemed to throw quite another light on this, and the fancy of once more being at home, and being able to carry out there

all his cherished schemes for managing the estate well, and making the tenants happy —this fancy was a bright one indeed, and his heart beat faster and his spirits rose higher at the bare thought.

Then came a dull cloud over all this—Dorothy! She lived there, or near there, he scarcely knew where; and after his long neglect of her—his dull, deep quarrel, that was no quarrel, but a mere self-created sore, he could not—no, he *could* not go and live where he might constantly meet her.

The thing was absurd, he tried to reason. But no; though they had parted over what the world calls a trifle—ay, what was a trifle, comparatively, for what man is there who has not at one time or another indulged in folly?—yet the shadow of that parting had grown blacker and blacker with the lapse of time, until now it seemed to Henry

he was all too base for Dorothy ever to dream of him again, while he himself felt that under such circumstances it would be gross ill-taste on his part to inflict his presence on her.

He was on the point of answering Beau's letter, and refusing the offer made him, when he remembered he was late for an engagement to lunch at Lady Montresor's, and he rushed off thither, leaving his letter till afterwards.

To his astonishment, one of the first people he met there was Dorothy's father, Mr. Desanges, who had just come over from America. Henry had half forgotten him, but a word or two soon awoke recollection, and he very soon found himself in the awkward position of being interrogated on the subject of Dorothy without liking to confess that he never met her now.

Mr. Desanges was as good a soul as ever

breathed, but, like all Americans, a little boastful. He had made no one knew how many millions, and so, perhaps, he was entitled to speak a little of himself and his doings; but he fairly astonished his hostess when the conversation happened to turn on the amount of money ladies spent on dress as compared with the past, and he utterly laughed to scorn all ideas of reasonable pin-money that even the most extravagant among the company promulgated. "Why, Lady Montresor," said he, "you should get my daughter to teach you how to spend money! It's only the other day she drew upon me for 20,000*l.*"

"Good heavens, Mr. Desanges! And what did you do?"

"Do? Why, of course I paid it. What else should I do? She wrote some long rigmarole, explaining, I suppose, why she wanted it; but I hadn't time to read that,

and calculated, so long as I paid, 'It didn't matter.'"

"But, Mr. Desanges, what could she spend all that money on?"

"Guess it was some of your milliners; Paxter, Tose and Morton they call themselves, I think."

"Paxter, Tose and Morton," cried Henry, "why, they are solicitors!"

"Well, I reckon it doesn't matter who they are so long as they're paid, does it?"

"Was this about three weeks ago?" asked Henry, not noticing the question.

"The bill would be drawn about then; it was presented to me just the day before I went on board for England."

Henry said no more, and took little notice of anything further that was said; but made an early excuse to get away, and sauntered along in the direction of West-

minster, musing very deeply over what he had heard.

Passing by Paxter, Tose and Morton's offices, he was half inclined to go in and question them, but reflected that it would be useless; so he went on till he came to the abbey, which he entered almost by instinct, and gazed, half in awe, at all the record of past worth and sacred dignity which it contains.

CHAPTER XX.

"Let those love now who never loved before,
Let those who always loved now love the more."

Thomas Parnell.

THE man who can walk through Westminster Abbey without feeling in some measure refined and elevated is a brute.

He who sees there only statues to criticize and ridicule, names to sneer at, and epitaphs to disbelieve—he is your nineteenth-century Materialist, who can see nothing that is not under his nose, and can appreciate nothing that does not appeal in some way to the most debased feelings of humanity.

It is in such a place as Westminster

Abbey that one may best realize the monstrously paltry calibre of the Radical of to-day: the man who is the incarnation of selfishness—Materialist in so far as the doctrine means uninterrupted sensualism; Radical in the hatred of all his superiors.

What fools these men are who thus aim at two points far asunder as the poles—at one moment claiming to be as the beasts that perish, and consequently entitled to every selfish pleasure; at another demanding with impassioned fervour the right of equality among mankind, which right can have no basis at all if it be not on the common possession of an immortal soul. Otherwise, why not treat men as beasts of burden if you can? What natural right have they to anything more than they can get for themselves?

Henry passed on into the Abbey, and found afternoon service just about com-

mencing. The organ was rolling forth its magnificent tones, the echoes of which went reverberating along the glorious roof. A good many people were pressing in, and Henry went with them, gazing on this side and that—now at the statues of the Cannings and Sir Robert Peel, now at Lord Palmerston, Lord Castlereagh, and other great ones, till finally he reaches the inner part, and is ushered to a seat, where he quietly kneels for a little, not noticing who is near him.

He is close by the choir, and this is in itself an attraction for the moment; but as he presently lifts his head and looks round, he starts with undisguised amazement, for he finds himself to be sitting next to Dorothy.

Their eyes met, and hers at the moment filled with tears, while her colour changed very perceptibly.

Henry's heart beat fast, and, without one

word spoken, he knew himself to be on the verge of some great crisis. He would so like to have blurted out all his sorrow for past remissness—to have acknowledged himself a brute—to have done something—anything—worthy of the place and of her.

And she? It is not too much to say that in the pure glory of the old Abbey, where the dross of the world may be so readily forgotten, she did for the time being feel drawn to him, and forgot all the past. It was not the silly pleasure of a girl who is in love, as the expression is commonly understood. No; there was for the time being a sense of sympathy and accord—a thought, perhaps, of all he had gone through, and a ray of delight at having helped him to endure it; a sense, as it were, of victory over difficulties, and a proud hope that he was now bound to succeed. These reflections all in a moment of time animated

Dorothy, while the magnificent music and the solemn associations of the place did much to render the incident of this unexpected meeting a thing to be pondered on.

To Henry the service passed like a dream, and he found himself walking by her side out of the Abbey, and so into the open air without fairly realizing what had happened.

Presently he recovered sufficiently to say,—

"Dorothy, I seem to have been horribly forgetful of you. I haven't been really; but— Well, I'm awfully sorry, you know."

Dorothy looked away and said nothing.

"I'm sure," he continued, "I don't wonder you don't speak to me. I felt it couldn't be otherwise when Beau wrote and asked me to go and live at the Castle."

She turned sharply round: "And did you consent to go and live there?"

"Oh no! How could I, feeling that I wasn't friends with you?"

She gave a little sigh of relief, and went on—"I'm glad to hear you say that, Henry, for it shows that you remembered me in some sense as you ought; but you are wrong in not going to live at the old place anyhow—for I am going to America."

"Good heavens, Dorothy! Don't say that. Just at this time, too, when I am really going to work, and want some one to sympathize and help."

"You have deserved my sympathy, have you not? And you think I should abandon my plans in consequence of your purely selfish wishes?"

"Oh, don't put it that way! I am all that is brutal, I know. I have never understood till now how my future really depends on you. I have no right to ask you to sacrifice anything on that account—no,

I'm a fool, and—ah, well, God bless you, Dorothy—good-bye."

He was about departing in hopeless case, when she stopped him: "You little understand me, Henry, if you think that I would hesitate to do anything to help you; and if by staying in England I can do you any good, you can count on me. I can, so far as helping you goes, forget all that has happened, and why we have been estranged. Yes; I would help you with my life, if need were."

Henry started, and looked earnestly in her face, but there was no trace of anything but firm determination—no softer fancy. By some chance his thoughts strayed off at a tangent to Paxter, Tose and Morton, and that 20,000*l.*, and he said boldly,—

"As for helping me, Dorothy, I believe you have already done an immense lot."

She showed some signs of confusion, and

said, "What should make you think that?" and then changed the subject; but he was sharp enough to see that he had to thank her for his salvation from bankruptcy.

There was something so strange about the feeling that she who had proved his best friend was so averse to his society, that he lapsed into silence as they walked slowly down Victoria Street towards Eaton Square. A genuine sorrow had taken hold of him for the past, and when at last he reached the door of the house where she was staying with the D'Aguilars he said, very wistfully, "How can I go to the old home if you aren't there?"

"Well," said she, "I'll be there; but, remember, it is only because you say I can help you."

The door closed, and Henry was left ruminating.

CHAPTER XXI.

"No place like home."
Howard Payne.

It remains but for us to be at Harrington some few days later, and to notice the unwonted excitement in the town. It is not that the people are preparing to welcome their member: that they have done already. What moves them now is that he is coming to live at Bolingbroke Park, that he is going once more to take up the threads of sympathy which during the evil time of Beau have been lying tangled and broken. There is a feeling that once more the community of the neighbourhood will be entire—will have its leader, and that

leader a portion of itself. There is no one who does not rejoice at the prospect.

Rejoice! Ay, they all do, in various ways. The Radical grocer knows that Henry will support the local trade; the Methodist parson knows that he will afford all facilities possible for the erection of chapels; the farmer knows that there will be a kindly consideration of rent in bad times; and the labourer looks forward to good times now, with many a shilling for nothing. Old Jack, who runs with the hounds, thinks life is beginning again, and dreams of affluence. And beyond these rejoicings, all more or less selfish, is the better feeling of the whole country-side—the feeling which tells that rich and poor are united; that class interests have no existence; that from highest to lowest there is but one grand aim in view—to advance, all together in the grand march

of progress—glad in the strength of mutual dependence.

Not all the evil times through which the Harrington people had passed, not all the petty accentuated jealousies inseparable from such a place, had availed to deaden entirely the Tory spirit which lives, more or less torpidly, in the breast of every true-born Briton, and watches over the Empire which it has created. Yes, even in this country place—ay, more because it *is* a country place—we get the glorious freshness of other days still breathing forth in English thoughts and feelings, despite the tuition of Aspland and the efforts of Radical Materialists. And so it happens that as Henry drives into the town a vast crowd of the people meets him. The horses are taken out of the carriage, and he is dragged in triumph once more to Trueman's Hotel.

Oh! what a multitude of glad faces are

there round about; what memories they bring of old days—for they are the dear old people whom he has known from his boyhood, and whom, after all, he cannot but love, with all their queer failings and stupid oddities.

What? Oh, he has to say something! Why, well—yes, he stands up in the carriage, and there is silence after much cheering.

Once, twice, he tries, and fails; then says: "My dear friends, God knows I am glad to be back here to live among you. There is not a man, woman, or child here who is not to me as a dear friend, and I hope you won't mind my not saying more, for I really cannot, except this—'God bless you all.'" And here he fairly broke down, and the people cheered to the echo, crowding round to shake him by the hand, and accost him in the familiar dialect, until he finds

he must delay no longer, and the horses are once more put to. Trueman receives an order to charge no one for drinks that night. "The teetotalers will object, perhaps," says Henry, "but then one hasn't a homecoming every day," and so off he drives, leaving a delighted populace behind him.

But on the way between Bolingbroke Park and Harrington he is met by all the principal tenants of the estate on horseback, in good old style, and among them old John Harrison with Charles. The old man is the first to whom Henry speaks, and that is to say, "You can get back to the old farm now, John."

The old man's eyes filled with tears, and he heartily grasped the hand held out to him, while he said, "Thank you, Lord Henry; I knew you'd do what was right."

And now all the others were crowding

round with congratulations and hearty good wishes. The whole procession formed up and escorted Henry along in triumph, accompanied by the local brass band, which made prodigious noise by the aid of a big drum.

They pass through the village where every one has turned out to see and greet him. It is as though he were himself coming into the property. And now they are in the park, crowding along past where we first saw Henry playing cricket a good many years ago.

There is still some frost on the ground and sparkling among the trees. The shooting season is barely over, and one or two rare old cock pheasants rise from the covert hard by as the strange assembly passes on.

The lawn is now reached, where is a tent spacious enough for all, and the house is

thrown open for any to enter who like. There are a few familiar faces at the entrance—the old Squire D'Aguilar, Lady Mary, Dorothy, Professor and Mrs. Towler (*née* Miss D'Aguilar), and three or four of the old servants.

Tom Elliot is with Henry.

It is the work as of a dream to get out and greet all these, and it is almost as a dream that Henry sees the afternoon pass by. The people are all delighted, and eat and drink their fill. Once more he has to speak, and this time he says :—

"Gentlemen,—My brother said to you, when he came of age, that the relationship of landlord and tenant was purely one of business, and to be treated accordingly. I have never been here since that day ; but since I come now at his request, I beg leave to say that I shall treat the matter as one of friendship, not business.

"Of course we must all be businesslike; that is a very different thing. But be sure of this, every tenant who does his best for his farm will find I'll do my best for him under all circumstances. We rise or fall together, gentlemen, and our interests are the same.

"That is all I have to say, except that I am very glad to see your faces again."

These few words were received with acclamation, and very soon aged farmers began to orate and propose all manner of toasts. The mirth increased and the happiness also, till Henry, seizing an opportunity when they were all well employed, stole off, and walked into the house to have a talk with Dorothy and his sister.

He was a good deal upset by the day, which was an altogether astonishing one to

him, and his nerves were in not the best order; so that he felt just a trifle uncomfortable when he found Dorothy alone in the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Oh fear not in a world like this,
And thou shall know ere long—
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong."

Longfellow.

YET in the heartfelt pleasure of his welcome home, Henry was not inclined at the moment to be retiring and timid. He forgot all his doubts and hesitations in the matter of Dorothy, and thought only of her as he saw her there, looking like a very goddess of beauty, and so sadly pensive as to render it most irresistible to break in and try to comfort her.

So was it, that Henry walking boldly up to her now said, as he took her hand,

"Dorothy, dear, I am so very happy to-day, and yet I can't be altogether happy unless I know that you are all right with me again. Do tell me the past is forgiven."

She looked up with something of tenderness in her glance, which hardened almost instantly into quiet reserve. "Forgiven, Henry? There was never any doubt of that. Yes; don't be troubled on that account."

"And you'll be the same as in the old days?"

"No, that cannot be. In the old days I thought of you, Henry, as of one who—but no matter, a great gulf is between now and then; you have cut yourself adrift from the old days, and you cannot revive them for me at will."

Henry looked at her in some surprise. "Do you mean, Dorothy, that because I've played the fool a little, and have neglected

you, that my conduct renders me hateful to you?"

"Ah, no, no; but you have shattered the image I once set up. You are not what I thought you might be, though I feel and know you will do great things in the world; and I will do anything on earth to help you. But don't misunderstand me, Henry; you died in my mind, or heart—call it what you will—when you showed you could forget and when you degraded yourself as you did."

Henry knew not what to say. Man-like, he never really dreamed that a woman could have a sincere affection for him and yet be sorely displeased, not to say disgusted, with his conduct; he knew not—how should he?—of the sensitive delicacy of an organization to which the rough attributes of human grossness are intolerable, and which can only find happiness in

a purity for which earth is, alas! an uncongenial soil. He thought at first she was not in earnest, and he tried to reason with her. "Why, look at Tom and Mary," said he. "I believe they're going to make a match of it; and very happy they'll be. But do you think Tom has lived for her only?"

"I don't think about it at all. Some people are doubtless satisfied with what I should loathe. I can imagine no true communion of lives where there has ever been a shadow to break the continuity. Do understand this, Henry—and do understand also that I believe in your future thoroughly. Nothing will ever shake my faith in that, or make me cease to try my best to help you. But remember, on the other hand, that the silver cord was loosed by you long ago, and nothing restores the lost harmony."

A variety of feelings were now conflicting in Henry's mind. In his inmost heart he had always loved Dorothy well and truly, though the passion had been almost dormant for a while. He had reverted to consciousness of it when first the idea of living near her had been brought to his mind by Beau's letter; and he would have been more than human if the consciousness subsequently attained of what she had been doing for him had not accentuated the feeling which all the while existed. He awoke to the full knowledge of her worth, and he awoke but to be told that she was not for him.

Men do not ramp and rave in real life; they do not tear a passion to tatters; nor do they fall down and adore the lady to whom they offer their estimable selves. But in the way of modern life—with such fire as is possible in these days—Henry did indicate his desperate disappointment, his

deep sorrow, his almost despair at what she told him.

What strange thoughts flit through the mind at unseasonable times! One of such fancies of his at the moment was that his family was doomed to extinction: Beau having got a lunatic wife, and thus being precluded from marrying again, and he now, as it seemed, put in equally hopeless case; for it was certain he would never marry any one but Dorothy; and he cried, half bitterly,—

"Yes, you are right, I know, in a way; though you little know the trouble you cause. Oh, Dorothy, how could you think that all the help, all the sympathy, all the encouragement in the world, would do me one little bit of good if it was to all end thus? Inspired by you, I might attain to any height, but without you—oh, no, no, I cannot live without you!"

Dorothy looked perplexed and troubled, but said,—

"Henry, a woman may help a man, I believe; but I wouldn't think much of a man who would sink for want of the help of a woman."

"It isn't that, it isn't that! I could and would stand alone. I don't want help. I want you. Had I never known you, Dorothy, I should be better off than having known to thus be cut off from you. I know I have acted badly. I know I am not what I ought to be for you. But I do love you; and—oh, do give me but a glimmer of a chance—some hope that by working on and on in the life that is before me, and gaining ground by your help, I may be rewarded by that which I have lost, that I may regain you when I have purified all my offences—if such a thing may be done by sincere and earnest work. Oh, heavens, Dorothy! you

will not, will you, condemn me to be utterly wretched always ?"

She had been looking away, and something like a tear was rolling down one of her cheeks. Yes it was a tear, for as she turned to Henry her eyes were brimming over. Hard resolve seemed to be vanishing beneath a softer influence, and it was with a tremulous voice indeed that she tried to speak.

* * * * *

"Oh here you are, Henry," cried his aunt, Mrs. Towler, rushing at this moment into the room. "The school children are outside, with a present for you. Come out at once and receive it, and speak to them."

So Henry received a silver teapot and spoke to those children.

THE END.

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